

Sam van Schaik/Imre Galambos
Manuscripts and Travellers

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Manuscripts and Travellers

The Sino-Tibetan Documents
of a Tenth-Century Buddhist Pilgrim

by

Sam van Schaik
Imre Galambos

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Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
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1 Introduction	1
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Part I Cultural Context and Historical Connections

2 The Dunhuang Manuscripts	13
3 Buddhist Pilgrimage to the West in the Tenth Century	35
4 Tibetans of the Borderlands	61

Part II The Manuscript

5 The Structure of the Manuscript	77
6 From the Gantong Monastery	87
7 The <i>Baoenjing</i>	107
8 The Tibetan Tantric Texts	127
9 The Letters of Passage	147
10 Conclusions	177

Maps	181
Bibliography	185
Index	205
Plates	213

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1 Introduction

Pilgrimage is a point at which several different spheres of activity, often considered in separation, intersect. While the religious aspect of pilgrimage might be considered primary, pilgrimage usually involves the realms of commerce and politics as well. Pilgrims often travel with merchants, where there is safety in numbers, and may engage in some trade themselves, such that it is often difficult to distinguish the pilgrim from the merchant. Equally, political factors become involved as soon as the pilgrim plans an extended journey, since travel over long distances invariably entails crossing political borders. In these circumstances pilgrims need to obtain official permission to travel, or the support of local authorities in the form of an escort or a letter of recommendation.¹

The manuscript that forms the basis for this book is a record of the pilgrimage of a Chinese monk in the late tenth century. The manuscript was one of thousands that were sealed in a cave in Dunhuang, in Chinese Central Asia, in the early eleventh century AD. The cave contained multitudes of Buddhist texts, and a smaller but significant amount of ephemeral material as well, including old contracts and letters. The cave was opened in the early twentieth century, and its contents taken away by explorers to several major institutions located in different countries. One of the major depositories of the Dunhuang material today is the British Library. It is here that our manuscript is now located.

The Chinese monk who owned the manuscript was on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy land of India. The main part of the manuscript (Manuscript A) is a scroll containing the monk's letters of passage for his journey through Tibetan regions of what are now the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Gansu.² This scroll was found glued together with two other manuscripts

1 On the overlapping of mercantile and religious activities see for example van Spengen 1998 on Tibetan pilgrims and Clarke 1998 on Hindu trading pilgrims.

2 Here "Tibetan regions" refers to the fact that these areas were dominated politically and culturally by Tibetans and Tibetophone peoples like the Azha (Ch. Tuyuhun 吐谷浑). It includes much of the Hexi corridor 河西走廊, the trade route that connects Central China with the trade routes to the west. The region is known to Tibetans as Dokham (*mdo khams*) or Amdo (*a mdo*).

that the pilgrim acquired on his travels. The longest part is what we call Manuscript B, with a Chinese sūtra on the recto and Tibetan tantric texts on the verso. Finally, the smallest part is Manuscript C, which has a Chinese text commemorating the building of a monastery near Liangzhou, which turns out to be a copy of an inscription from the early seventh century. Crucially, the colophon to this manuscript states that the copy was made in 968 by the monk Daozhao, thus providing us with a date and a name.

These three manuscripts together form a single record of a pilgrimage. They are referred to throughout this book as the “Daozhao manuscript”, after what was probably the name of the monk himself.³ The manuscript is a unique record of a pilgrimage, its multiple nature opening up for us the multifarious purposes of pilgrimage and the many functions of the manuscript. It also sheds light on a crucial period of history, the second half of the tenth century, when both China and Tibet were just beginning to attain some level of stability after more than a century of fragmentation.

1.1 Passports and letters of passage in China

The passport has a long history in China.⁴ Passports are attested as far back as the beginning of the first century AD, during the Han dynasty. Among the wooden documents from the Etsin-gol region there are several permits for travel, in which the issuer of the passport requests that the holder be allowed to pass through official boundaries, primarily customs posts.⁵ By the third century Silk Road trade was flourishing, and numerous traders, especially Sogdians from the Iranian regions, travelled east to Central Asia and China. The biography of an official from the Central Asian town of Dunhuang, Cang Ci 倉慈 (fl. 227–232) relates how he helped Sogdian traders complete their journeys.⁶ The biography states that previously such merchants had

3 The manuscript is IOL Tib J 754. As we will see below, the name Daozhao 道昭 appears in the colophon of part C of the manuscript. It is quite possible that this is the name of the pilgrim monk, although it might equally be the name of a scribe hired by the monk. In calling this manuscript the “Daozhao manuscript” we intend to give it a memorable name, but the reader should keep in mind that the application of the name Daozhao to the pilgrim monk is only a hypothesis.

4 On the history of the passport in general, see Torpey 2000, Alter 2003, and Lloyd 2003.

5 At this time passports appear to have been known by various names. By the end of the Han dynasty (206BC–220AD), *guosuo* seems to have become standard. The term *guosuo* was then used through to the end of the Tang dynasty.

6 *Sanguozhi* 三國志: 512.

been stopped at Dunhuang so that the officials there could buy their goods at prices much lower than they would fetch in China. Cang Ci allowed them to pass, and facilitated their journeys with the issue of passports (*guosuo* 過所).⁷

During the Tang dynasty (618–907) the use of the official passport became especially widespread as the movement of every private individual was regulated by means of the *guosuo*. During this period the form of the passport was standardized, and the contents held very specific information about the route that the bearer was allowed to travel. This regulation of the movement of private individuals, including merchants and pilgrims, was undoubtedly restrictive, but the high degree of state control also allowed long-distance trade and pilgrimage to flourish. This degree of regulation could no longer be maintained after the interregnum of 755–763, when the previous level of centralized state control, especially of China's western regions, was no longer possible. The next strong dynasty to emerge in China, the Song (960–1279), did not revive the *guosuo* passport of the Tang, but instead opted for a more general official certification for travel (*gongping* 公憑).

Outside of the areas of China under centralized state control, less official forms of the passport were also used. We find an example of this in the biography of the pilgrim Xuanzang 玄奘 (596–664), who travelled from China to India via the Silk Road. The king of Turfan, one of the major oasis states on the pilgrim's route, gave Xuanzang twenty-four letters addressed to local rulers at various points on the journey. Each letter requested an escort and new horses for the pilgrim.⁸ Letters of passage like these are to be distinguished from the passports issued by a centralized state. In the pre-modern period, such letters were often associated with pilgrimage.⁹

7 Arakawa 2001: 2–3. The following section is mainly drawn from Arakawa's excellent survey of the passport system of the Tang dynasty. On the Tang *guosuo*, see also Cheng 2000.

8 This is recounted in Xuanzang's biography. See Beal 1911: 30.

9 We have examples from Medieval England, for instance, of petitions for letters of passage from would-be pilgrims to Rome, now held in the UK National Archives. In 1378, Robert de Kyrkeby requested a writ of passage through the English ports of Dover and Sandwich, for a pilgrimage to Rome (Doc. no.SC 8/206/10270; a record of the granting of this license is found in CCR 1377-81: 528). A little later, in the early fifteenth century, William Fynche, a chaplain, made a similar request for "letters of passage to the keepers of passage at the ports of London, Dover, Sandwich and Orwell" (Doc. no. SC 8/206/10270).

1.2 Light on the dark ages

By the end of the ninth century, both the Tang dynasty of China and the Yarlung dynasty of Tibet had been fatally weakened by internal strife. By the tenth century both China and Tibet experienced the usurpation of centralized control by regional warlords. This led to a lapse in the keeping of official records, which means that we know much less of the tenth century than the centuries that preceded and followed it. In traditional Tibetan histories, the tenth century is known as “the era of fragmentation” (*sil bu’i dus*), and is chiefly characterised as a period of uprisings against the representatives of the Tibetan imperial authorities, and a persecution and collapse of the Buddhist monastic system that they had supported.

The Tibetan historical tradition, which is mainly concerned with religious matters, presents a consistent narrative of this dark period. This is the story of the preservation of the Buddhist monastic lineage by certain monks in the far north-eastern corner of Tibet, known to Tibetans as Amdo. According to this narrative, refugee monks from central Tibet passed on the monastic ordination to local monks in Amdo at the end of the ninth century, and this monastic community was instrumental in re-introducing monastic Buddhism to Central Tibet in the late tenth century.¹⁰

There is little contemporary evidence to support these traditional narratives. But Daozhao’s letters of passage were written by Tibetan officials and monks from this very same area, at this crucial time. They represent a chance to cast some light upon this dark period, and they confirm that there was indeed a thriving Buddhist monastic culture in the region during the latter part of the tenth century. In fact, they show that the geographical extent and social influence of Tibetan monastics was greater than what is suggested in the traditional narratives. And they also show something not stated outright in these narratives: a close relationship between secular and monastic power. This was to be a significant feature of Tibetan history from this point through to the twentieth century.¹¹

1.3 Materiality and the manuscript

There is much to be said for approaching the study of manuscripts as an investigation of their *materiality*, that is, their role in material culture. In

¹⁰ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of these narratives and their sources.

¹¹ On this aspect of Tibetan culture see Cüppers 2004.

anthropological discussions *materiality* signifies the foregrounding of the material objects produced by a society, rather than subjects that compose that society. Of course, there is also a recognition here of the interdependence of human subjects and the objects they create. The changing status of objects, in dependence on how they are perceived and valued by people, was the subject of *The Social Life of Things*, an influential collection of anthropological studies published in 1986, in which the introductory essay argued for the study of the trajectory of objects as they move in and out of different conditions of identification.¹² In a chapter of this collection entitled “The Cultural Biography of Things,” Igor Kopytoff explored the basic principles required for the biography of a material object:

In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its “status” and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider an ideal career for such things? What are the recognized “ages” or periods in the thing’s “life,” and what are the cultural markers for them? How does the thing’s use change with its age, and what happens when it reaches the end of its usefulness?¹³

It is clear that many of these questions can be asked of the manuscripts that reside in museums and private collections all over the world. Most manuscripts have passed through several different stages in their “lives” and been accorded different kinds of status by those who have commissioned, written, owned, repaired, sold or collected them. The attempt to reconstruct a manuscript’s biography is initially helpful in alerting us to the cultural specificity of our own perception that the manuscript has a particular status and use – such as being in a museum collection and containing a text which engages our interest. Subsequently, as we study the manuscript’s historical trajectory, we can move toward a reconstruction, if only partial, of the way a manuscript functioned, and the way it was perceived, at various points in its career.

Thus the study of manuscripts is, whether implicitly or explicitly, also a study of materiality. When we study a manuscript we must take into account the circumstances of its creation. These include the individuals who crea-

¹² Appadurai 1986.

¹³ Kopytoff 1986: 66–67.

ted it, as well as the wider social norms that allowed it to come into being. We must also consider the physical elements that had to come together to produce the manuscript, including the paper, ink and writing implement.¹⁴ In this activity we are engaged in a mental disassembling of the manuscript into its social and physical causes and conditions. A manuscript is never truly finished, but goes on to perform a variety of functions. It may evolve textually through later emendation and additions, and even if it does not, it may still change its role over time, and this changing role may help us understand the cultures in which the manuscript existed. This was the argument of a pioneering work of art historical theory published in 1962, George Kubler's *The Shape of Time*. Kubler wrote:

Our choice of “the history of things” is more than a euphemism to replace the bristling ugliness of “material culture.” This term is used by anthropologists to distinguish ideas, or “mental culture” from artefacts. But the “history of things” is intended to reunite ideas and objects under the rubric of visual forms: the term includes both artefacts and works of art, both replicas and unique examples, both tools and expressions—in short, all materials worked by human hands under the guidance of connected ideas developed in a temporal sequence. From all these things a shape in time emerges.¹⁵

Kubler thus argued that every cultural object should be considered as multiple, a collection of traits, each of which has its own “systematic age”, that is, its particular links with tradition and past cultural practice. Thus he hoped that the analysis of an object could return it to the flow of time, rather than placing it in an arbitrary, static category. Such an approach is eminently suited to the deep study of a single manuscript. The manuscript at the centre of this study is itself many kinds of object. It is not just an administrative document, a religious souvenir, or a carrier of sacred texts; it is all of these things and more, in that it is an artefact of a particular activity: pilgrimage.

In this book we will trace the trajectory of the manuscript over time during the course of the pilgrimage; we will see how it performed different functions for different people; we will show the composite nature of the

14 One of the few comprehensive studies of a Dunhuang manuscript that takes these factors into account is Teiser 1994.

15 Kubler 2008 [1962]: 8. Priscillia Colt's review is a clear summary of Kubler's approach and aims in the book (of which he approved); see Colt 1963.

manuscript by notionally taking it apart and seeing what we can learn from its composite parts. Each of these parts has its own trajectory in time; that is to say, each part has different cultural antecedents, had different meaning and value when it was created and first used, and is treated differently by different fields of study in modern scholarship. And yet the parts of the manuscript are also interlinked in that they were put together by a certain pilgrim in the tenth century, and carried with him as personal property, before being deposited in Dunhuang. Thus at the end of this book we will notionally put the manuscript back together again, and look at how the cultural paths of its individual parts meet in this singular artefact.

1.4 The structure of the book

In Part I we discuss the cultural setting for the Daozhao manuscript, beginning in Chapter 2 with an introduction to the Dunhuang manuscript collection. This was the home of the manuscript for a thousand years, the quietest years in its biography. The question of how the manuscript ended up in this great hidden cache is inseparable from questions about the nature of the cache itself. Was it a sacred rubbish heap? Was it an extension of a nearby monastic library? Arguments about the identity of the cave have tended to focus on one particular function, but here we argue that these functions are not exclusive, and we highlight the sometimes neglected magical aspect of Buddhist manuscripts as representations of the Buddha's body.

In Chapter 3 we look at the tradition of pilgrimage in China. Considering the prevalence of the theme of the journey to the West in Chinese history and culture, it is of major significance to find first-hand material like the Daozhao manuscript which documents such a journey. Material evidence related to the pilgrimages is scarce, as most of what has come down to us (in artistic and literary forms) was intended to be preserved and in many ways represents the result of a conscious, and consequently artificial, effort to create an idealized image of the pilgrim and the act of pilgrimage. In contrast, our manuscript is one of the few which affords us a glimpse into the details of how such journeys were carried out and who supported the pilgrims along the way.

In Chapter 4 we discuss the political and cultural role of Tibetan-speakers in what is now the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Gansu. This was the world through which the pilgrim passed in the second half of the tenth century, a realm of petty kingdoms and gilded monasteries. The letters in the Daozhao manuscript allow us a unique insight into the day-to-day affairs

of these Tibetan kingdoms, and in their correspondence between secular and monastic officials, they give an impression of how the religious and secular spheres were interacting, and to some degree merging during this period.

Then in Part II the Daozhao manuscript itself comes to the centre of our study. In Chapter 5 examine the composite nature of the manuscript, and how it came to be put together in this form. This is a kind of archaeology, in which we travel back from the current state of the manuscript in the British Library, through the changes imposed on the manuscript by the archivists of the India Office Library, to the function of the component parts of the manuscript as it was assembled by the pilgrim. Each component is then analysed in more detail in the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 6 we look at one panel of the manuscript that is a copy of a stele inscription (Manuscript C), and argue that this is a souvenir of pilgrimage. The inscription commemorates the building of the Gantong monastery on Mount Yu near Liangzhou, and this copy of it is particularly important because its colophon contains a name and a date. The inscription was copied by the monk Daozhao in the year of 968. There is also evidence that while this particular manuscript copy was produced in the tenth century, the original inscription (i.e. the text itself) commemorates the building of the Gantong monastery three and a half centuries earlier. In terms of the handwriting, Daozhao's copy of the inscription is very similar to the Chinese notes that appear between the Tibetan letters on another part of the manuscript, suggesting that the two were either written by the same person, or produced within the confines of the same monastic community. In either case, it is clear that the date of 968 in Daozhao's colophon holds true not only for the copy of the inscription but also, at least approximately, for the Tibetan letters. This also suggests that the pilgrim whose advancement the letters of introduction were supposed to facilitate was in fact Daozhao, and thus we have put his name to our group of manuscripts.

In Chapter 7 we examine the Chinese sūtra that is found on the large scroll section the manuscript (Manuscript B). This is a copy of *juan* 3 of the *Dafangbian Fo baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經 (*T.03.0156), or the *Sūtra of Repaying Kindness*, an apocryphal Buddhist scripture which was highly popular as an artistic theme in the wall paintings at the Dunhuang caves. The text itself also occurs in numerous copies among the Dunhuang manuscripts. One of these includes a colophon stating that it was copied on behalf of the monk Daoyuan, who is known to have returned from India in 965, only a few years before Daozhao's pilgrimage. This copy has a Khotanese medical text on the verso. Therefore, these two copies of the text

show a number of similarities: both were created in the 960s in the course of a pilgrimage of Chinese monks to India. In addition, the verso of both manuscripts contains non-Chinese texts of pragmatic nature.

In Chapter 8 we look at the Tibetan texts that are written on the verso of this scroll. These are tantric texts, and we show here that they are closely aligned with developments in Tibetan Buddhism elsewhere during the same period, including for example rituals focused on the bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara and the wrathful rituals of the *kīla* dagger. The scroll also contains a treatise on Mahāyoga, by far the most popular expression of Buddhist tantric practice in tenth-century Tibet. An analysis of the handwriting on this scroll shows that it was written by more than one person, and this suggests that the scroll that originally contained a Chinese copy of the *Baoenjing* was later re-used by a community of tantric practitioners to record texts in an ad-hoc fashion, possibly from itinerant tantric teachers. We also show that Tibetan was the language for teaching and recording the texts of Mahāyoga, even for Chinese people, and that the authors of these texts may have been non-Tibetans using the language for this specific purpose.

Finally in Chapter 9 we offer a transcription and discussion of the Tibetan letters of passage and the Chinese notes that surround them. We discuss here the fact that all of the letters are written by officials with Tibetan, or partially Tibetan names and apart from one ‘open letter’ are addressed to high-ranking monks. This close relationship between secular and monastic spheres becomes even closer in the final letters, which are written by a figure who seems to straddle the secular and religious realms. Other historical sources suggest that this was increasingly common from the eleventh century onwards, both here and in other parts of Tibet, and these letters suggest that this process was well-underway already by the 960s. Having thus disassembled the Daozhao manuscript in order to consider its parts in isolation from each other, we then bring them together again in the Conclusion, and discuss their relation to each other, and the changing roles occupied by this composite manuscript as it moved through time and space.

2 The Dunhuang Manuscripts

2.1 The discovery of the cave

At the very beginning of the twentieth century a huge cache of ancient manuscripts was discovered in the Buddhist cave complex near the desert town of Dunhuang in China. Dunhuang had once been a great centre of Buddhism, located at a crossroads on the ancient Silk Road, but by the twentieth century it had become a quiet town in China's western provinces. Dunhuang was particularly well known for the Buddhist Mogao cave complex, a long cliff face studded with hundreds of beautifully painted caves located to the southeast of the town.

In the year 1900 the caves were in the care of a single monk, Wang Yuanlu 王圓籙, who was using what little funds he had to restore some of the caves. In the course of his work Wang discovered a hidden chamber off the side of one of the large caves. This chamber was packed from floor to ceiling with manuscripts and paintings. Rumours of the find began to circulate through the area as Wang sold some of the scrolls, or gave them away as presents. The news soon reached the British-Hungarian explorer Aurel Stein (1862–1943), who was in the middle of his second Central Asian expedition. Stein hurried to the caves, realizing that other explorers active in Central Asia would not be far behind.¹

Over the course of several days, Stein negotiated with Wang, who was initially unwilling to part with any of the manuscripts. Stein described his first glimpse of the cave thus:

The sight of the small room disclosed was one to make my eyes open wide. Heaped up in layers, but without any order, there appeared in the dim light of the priest's little lamp a solid mass of manuscript bundles rising to a height of nearly ten feet, and filling, as subsequent measurement showed, close on 500 cubic feet. The area left clear within the room was just sufficient for two people to stand in.²

1 On Stein's explorations, see Mirsky 1998 and Whitfield 2004b.

2 Stein 1912 (*Ruins of Desert Cathay*), vol. II: 172.

Ultimately a combination of monetary payments and Stein's canny comparison of himself to Xuanzang, the iconic seventh century pilgrim who carried Buddhist scriptures from India to China, convinced Wang to part with a significant portion of the manuscripts. Other explorers soon followed Stein. Eight months later the Frenchman Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) arrived. Pelliot spent several days selecting manuscripts, compiling a haul comparable to Stein's. In 1909 Pelliot showed a selection of his newly acquired manuscripts to local scholars in Beijing. The Chinese authorities, spurred into action, issued an order for all of the Chinese manuscripts remaining in the library cave to be brought to Beijing. This was carried out with only partial success, and later visits to Dunhuang by Japanese and Russian expeditions also carried away smaller but still significant collections of manuscripts.³

By the end of this period of acquisition the original contents of the Dunhuang cave were scattered across the globe. The largest manuscript collections are now held at the British Library (London), the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris) and the National Library of China (Beijing). Other major Dunhuang collections are held at the National Museum of India (New Delhi) and the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (St Petersburg). The objects that Aurel Stein acquired from Central Asia were initially split between several different institutions. The manuscript material was given to the British Museum, the India Office Library and the British Government of India. By 1982 most of the manuscript material from the British Museum and India Office Library had been transferred to the British Library. The British Museum collection now comprises mainly the illustrated and three-dimensional items brought back by Stein. The manuscript that is at the centre of our study was one of those that were originally deposited in the India Office Library, and now resides at the British Library.

2.2 The contents of the cave

The contents of the manuscripts that came out of the cave are extraordinarily diverse. They are written in over a dozen languages, of which Tibetan and Chinese are the most common, followed by Sanskrit, Khotanese, Sog-

3 It was originally thought that a number of Chinese scrolls had been stolen *en route* to Beijing. In fact these scrolls were stolen from the Ministry of Education in Beijing, as explained in Rong Xinjiang 2002. Moreover, the remaining Tibetan manuscripts appear to have been of no interest to the Chinese authorities at this time, and were left in Gansu, where they remain today; see van Schaik 2002.

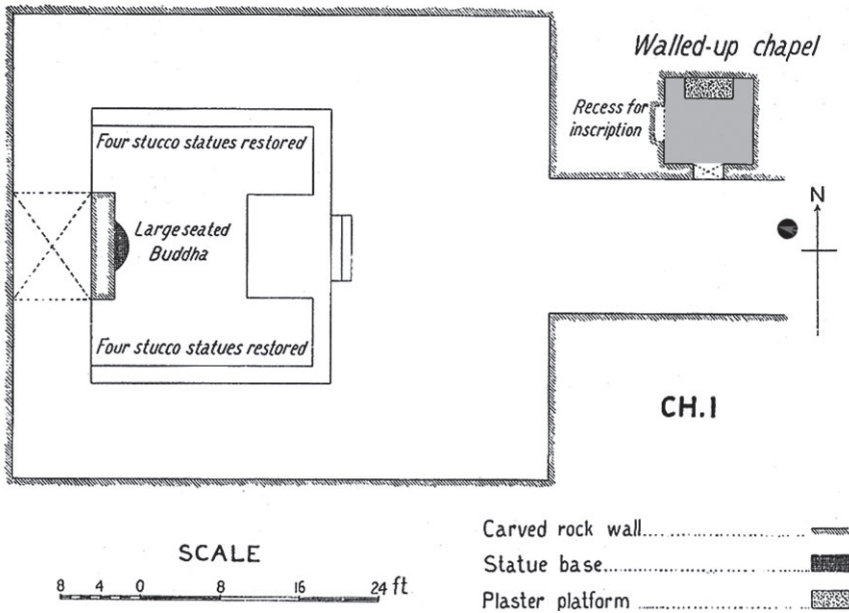


Fig. 1 Stein's plan of the manuscript cave, showing the location of the altar and the inscription commemorating the monk Hongbian (*Serindia*, v. 3, Plans: 43).

dian and Uighur, among others. The texts themselves range across a variety of genres; the following is an attempt to map out the most important of these:

(i) First of all, the largest group is the Buddhist sūtras. These include thousands of copies of certain popular texts like the *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Sūtra of Golden Light*. Most of these sūtras are translations from Indic texts, though some are so-called apocryphal sūtras, composed or compiled from existing material in China or Central Asia. Often we have many copies of the same sūtra, sometimes running into hundreds or even thousands. This can be understood in the light of the emphasis in the Mahāyāna on the merit to be gained from making copies of sūtras. Some of the Mahāyāna sūtras contain passages that encourage their own propagation, enjoining their readers to spread the sūtra by reading, memorizing and reciting it. Some, like the *Lotus Sūtra* and the *Diamond Sūtra*, also specifically suggest making copies of the sūtra.⁴

⁴ For a recent discussion of this aspect of Buddhist cultures, see Kieschnick 2003, chapter 3.

All such activity is said to generate religious merit resulting in better circumstances in this life and those that follow. In China, folk-stories tell of ordinary folk who copied sūtras, or paid for them to be copied, and were rewarded after death. The colophons of many of the sūtras from the Dunhuang cave are proof of the general belief in the efficacy of the merit generated from copying sūtras. They usually dedicate the resulting merit to their own future lifetimes, to their families, or to sentient beings in general. Sometimes a local lord or distant king might sponsor a mass sūtra-copying project. The Tibetan emperor Tri Tsug Detsen (r. 815–841), for example, ordered hundreds of copies of the large *Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* to be made at Dunhuang when it was under Tibetan rule in the ninth century. Many of these ended up in Cave 17.

(ii) Other Buddhist scriptures that were not so heavily copied include the texts of the vinaya (the basis for the monastic rule), commentaries explaining the sūtras, treatises by great Indian Mahāyāna exegetes like Nāgārjūna and Vasubhandu, and a few tantras. With the advent of printing we find some sūtras made from woodblock prints, like the famous *Diamond Sūtra* printed in 868. By the tenth century hundreds of prayer sheets were being printed, mostly with images of a buddha or bodhisattva above the syllables of a sacred spell (*dhāraṇī*).

Other Buddhist manuscripts are of a more local nature, works written by Buddhists from China, Tibet, and Central Asian kingdoms like Khotan. Here we find more evidence of the culture behind the manuscripts. There are collections of prayers to be recited, instructions on meditation known as *sādhana*, rituals for funerals and other important occasions, notes from lectures, simple catechisms of Buddhist doctrine, and so on. There was apparently a thriving Buddhist society in and around Dunhuang through to the beginning of the eleventh century when the cave was closed (and probably after this as well, through to the period of Mongol rule in the thirteenth century).⁵ Buddhist monks received financial support from the local laity, and in return performed various kinds of ritual for them.

(iii) Though no other religion challenged the popularity of Buddhism at Dunhuang in the first millennium CE, several other religions are represented in the manuscripts, including Christianity (of the Nestorian heresy), Judaism, Manichaeism, Daoism. A series of unnamed local practices that are not so easily classified as one religion or another are also present, such as the cults of local spirits, which sometimes came into conflict with Buddhism, as they

5 On the social role of the monks (and nuns), see Gernet 1995 and Hao 1998.

involved animal sacrifice.⁶ We also find divination practices of various kinds, including astrology, reading the shapes of clouds, and mirror divination. Popular literature is represented in stories known as “transformation texts” (*bianwen* 變文), that would often have been told by travelling storytellers and took elements from Buddhism as well as other popular traditions.⁷

(iv) Though much outnumbered by the religious material, there is a significant number of secular manuscripts – mainly official records of one kind or another. We have for instance official letters, contracts, land and tax registries and royal chronicles. These may have originally been part of a local official archive. They certainly contain documents from the various rulers of Dunhuang, especially from the Tibetan overlords, and the local Chinese rulers that followed the fall of the Tibetan empire.

(v) Finally, there are the non-textual items. Most numerous are the paintings, most of which are of buddhas and bodhisattvas. Portraits of patrons are sometimes included in the lower half of the painting, demonstrating that, like the manuscripts, many paintings were commissioned. Again, these are evidence of the belief in the meritorious nature of such commissions. Other non-textual material includes paper printed with numerous small images of buddhas and flowers made of paper.

The forms of the manuscripts are almost as diverse as their contents, and represent some five centuries in the history of bookbinding. The most common form is the scroll, a long roll of paper created by pasting together rectangular sheets. The scroll was used both for Buddhist scriptures and secular documents in China. It has been suggested that the scroll form developed from the earlier Chinese practice of tying bamboo or wooden slips together and rolling them up, though recent discoveries of Buddhist scrolls from Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan suggest that the form may have come to China along with Buddhist manuscripts from the west. Another popular form, the pothi, was also closely linked to Buddhism, being based on the long and slim Indian palm leaf book form. Pothi pages made from paper seem to have appeared first in Central Asia, and then been adapted by Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists.

A later development (probably from the ninth century onwards) in the form of the book was based on the scroll form but folded in concertina fa-

⁶ This has recently been the subject of a book by Yu Xin (2006) of Fudan University.

⁷ On *bianwen* literature, see Victor Mair’s books *Tun-huang popular narratives* (Mair 1983) and *T’ang transformation texts* (Mair 1989).

shion so that each fold was the same size as a pothi leaf. Thus the concertina combined two different forms of the book, and can also be seen as a precursor of the bound book or codex, which is the latest stage of bookbinding found in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The codex, similar to the concertina, provides easier access to the text at various points than the scroll, while avoiding the problems of loose-leaf books presented by the pothi. In Dunhuang it seems to have first appeared in the tenth century, and like the concertina, was mainly used to record Buddhist texts. This was to become the dominant form in China. Though scrolls and codices were also used in Tibet, the pothi remained by far the most popular book form there for Buddhist texts.

The Daozhao manuscript is composed of three scrolls. Though all of the book forms mentioned above were in use by the time it was written, the scroll form remained the most popular for both secular documents and Buddhist scriptures. The scroll form was also quite adaptable, so that manuscripts could ‘grow’ through the addition of further sheets or become an aggregate of several manuscripts.

2.3 The functions of the cave and the reasons for its sealing

The hidden chamber in which these manuscripts were found (known in Stein’s numbering as Cave 17) was originally a meditation cave, and then funerary shrine, for a monk called Hongbian 洪辯 who served as the head abbot of the Buddhist institutions at Dunhuang during the early to mid ninth century. The centrepiece of the cave was a statue of the abbot in meditation, placed on a raised altar with decorative murals on either side. A small recess on one wall contained a stone stele with the text of an imperial appointment decree honouring the monk.⁸ Funerary caves like this are indeed a common feature in Dunhuang, though most, commemorating wealthy locals, were of larger size.⁹

Hongbian’s cave may have originally contained some or all of his remains, serving as a reliquary. Some of the monk’s own manuscripts and paintings may have been placed here as well; the manuscripts found in the

8 Hongbian’s statue, though not the stele, was removed before the cave was sealed, and was in Cave 362, until it was moved back into the library cave in 1965. See the extensive discussion of this issue in Imaeda 2008: 92–95. Imaeda suggests that the statue was moved merely to create more storage space in the cave, disputing the conclusion of Ueyama (2002) that the removal was an act of disparagement.

9 See Ma Shichang 1995: 314. Ma states here that the number of burial caves at the Dunhuang site exceeds that of any other Chinese cave site. See also Ma Shichang 1978: 22–28.

cave include many from Hongbian's lifetime, and a number of personal letters addressed to the monk.¹⁰ In any case, like the other funerary caves at Dunhuang, it would have served as a site for occasional rituals and regular offerings. Such offerings could also have included manuscripts and paintings, since votive offerings of manuscripts are well attested in Chinese and Central Asian Buddhist cultures. Stein was the first to suggest this, noting that the cave contained many bundles of fragmentary manuscripts:

I may specially mention numerous small bags carefully packed and sewn up in cloth which contained nothing but tiny scraps of paper bearing Chinese characters, apparently fragments of religious texts. They had evidently been picked up and collected for the same superstitious reason which now causes Chinese people to rescue from floors and streets all bits of inscribed paper for ceremonial burning.¹¹

Stein's remarks are perceptive, even though he was not fully aware of the ritual function of manuscripts in Buddhist cultures. Since Stein's time similar bundles of cloth-wrapped fragmentary manuscripts have been discovered in many Buddhist sites, including, recently, in the destroyed statues of Bamiyan. Writing of this find, Jens-Uwe Hartmann remarks:

Books used for such ritual and cosmological purposes no longer function only as a means for communicating their verbal contents. The text they contain represents an ultimate presence of the Buddha and his supernatural powers. It is no longer read; on the contrary, it is hidden, placed within a container, such as an amulet, reliquary *stūpa*, Buddha image, or perhaps an altar.¹²

On the magical function of such votive manuscripts, Hartmann writes that:

... it is not the quantity and, more irritating for modern scholars, it is not the philological completeness of the text that brings about the desired effects of protection. Texts may be incomplete and still represent the whole of the dharma.¹³

10 Letters addressed to Hongbian, or mentioning him, include Pelliot tibétain 999, 1079, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202 and 1203.

11 Stein 1921 (*Serindia*): 820.

12 Hartmann 2009: 102.

13 Hartmann 2009: 102–103.

Thus rather than being a simple ‘superstition’, the collecting and depositing of tiny manuscript fragments should be understood in the light of the belief that even a fragment can serve as a representation of the Buddha’s entire teachings, the dharma. Richard Salomon has made this point in his study of another hidden manuscript collection, the Gāndhārī manuscript fragments:

It can be safely assumed that the manuscripts in question, regardless of their specific character or condition, were understood and treated as relics. The status of their written representations of the words of the Buddha (*buddhavacana*) as dharma-relics (*dharma-śarīra*), functionally equivalent to bodily relics (*śarīra*) of the Buddha or other Buddhist venerables, is widely acknowledged in the Buddhist tradition. Thus, the essential motivation for interring manuscripts is obvious; it was a form of relic dedication.¹⁴

Salomon goes on to enumerate reasons for the interring of Buddhist manuscripts.¹⁵ These may be paraphrased as follows:

- (i) Interment was most often a merit-making exercise, just like the interment of bodily relics.
- (ii) In some cases, manuscripts may have been buried alongside the remains of monks.
- (iii) In the case of old or discarded manuscripts, a secondary motivation may have been the ritual disposal of useless manuscripts.
- (iv) Finally, manuscripts may have been concealed as “dharma insurance” to ensure the survival of the Buddha’s teachings.

These four rationales essentially cover all of the reasons that have been suggested for the sealing of the Dunhuang cave. As well as implying the first possibility, Stein also suggested the third, coining a popular term in discussing the cave: “sacred waste.”¹⁶ Depositories for unwanted sacred

¹⁴ Salomon 2009: 30.

¹⁵ Salomon 2009: 30–31 (note that below we have swapped the order of items (ii) and (iii) in Salomon’s discussion).

¹⁶ This theory was also favoured by Fujieda Akira (1966; 1981) and Fang Guangchang (1988; 1991). Fujieda believed that the manuscripts were removed from daily circulation because of the spread of printing. In his English-language introduction to the Dunhuang corpus, for example, he criticizes Giles for treating “waste paper discarded by the copyists as fragments of regular manuscripts” (Fujieda 1966: 4). Fang, on the other hand, attributed the depository to the large-scale inventory project that took place sometime during the Tibetan occupation, in the course of which unused manuscript fragments and other obsolete documents were deposited in the library cave.

manuscripts are known in many cultures, with the Jewish *geniza* being particularly famous.¹⁷ The Cairo Geniza contained thousands of sacred manuscript fragments along with secular materials like legal documents and correspondence, a striking parallel with the contents of the Dunhuang cave. In Buddhist cultures, the most detailed description of the practice of interring unwanted manuscripts is found in Lajos Ligeti's observations on Mongolian Buddhism, made during his three-year field research (1928–1931) in the monasteries of Northern China:¹⁸

In the lama temple at Niudoukoumen I was confronted with an abundance of books from which I could choose. This was because I discovered a so-called book cemetery in one of the side buildings, to the left of the main gates. The floor of the entire building was covered with Tibetan and Mongolian books. After seeing how the books were treated at Xifumiao, it is not hard to imagine why such a great number of them ended up in this book cemetery. Even today, most of the larger temples have a book cemetery, although in the old days they were actually considered indispensable. Holy books could not be burnt, even though some of them were worn down to the state of becoming completely unusable. These were then thrown into the book cemetery. Still, at the book cemetery at Niudoukoumen I could choose not only from useless copies of shabby prayer books but was also able to recover a number of rare and precious manuscripts and books. As described earlier, the original library had been gradually demolished. When the spring wind tore a book apart and blew the leaves all over the place, the lamas were unwilling to undertake the painstaking task lasting several days to reassemble the books in the correct order, but instead took the dishevelled leaves and threw them into the book cemetery.¹⁹

This model has come to be known in Dunhuang studies as *feiqi shuo* 廢棄說, or the “waste theory.”

17 The similarity between the Gandharan manuscript finds and the *geniza* has been discussed by Salomon (1999: 81–84).

18 The following paragraphs are translated from Hungarian, Ligeti's native tongue in which he wrote his popular account (Ligeti 1934) of his experiences in the region. For the scientific results of this journey, see his French report (Ligeti 1933); for a brief English language overview, including translations from his popular account, see Galambos 2010. Of course, the customs Ligeti witnessed have no direct connection with the Dunhuang caves, and we are citing his observations here only for the sake of reference.

19 Ligeti 1934: 390–391.

Ligeti goes on to describe his frustrations in working with this material:

Truly, few activities are more exciting, and frustrating, than finding a complete manuscript, one leaf at a time, in such a book cemetery. On the very first day, for example, I found a very valuable Mongolian manuscript which was half Shamanic, half Buddhist. The whole thing consisted of only sixteen pages and I was about to happily pocket my precious find when I noticed that the twelfth leaf (each separate leaf had only one number) was missing. It took me two days of hard search and a considerable amount of luck to find the missing twelfth leaf. Unfortunately, I was not always so lucky and many leaves I was not able to find. Who knows where the wind had taken these?²⁰

Indeed, Ligeti's frustrations are familiar to those who have worked with the similar loose-leaf material from the Dunhuang caves, primarily in Sanskrit and Tibetan. The lack of pages from the beginning and end of such manuscripts, and the often disordered nature of the pages within the manuscripts, suggests a similar situation. Elsewhere, Ligeti also describes another "book cemetery":

The book cemetery in Chaoyang was called "dry well." This was a small separate building, walled up from all sides, with a small opening on one side large enough to throw in newer books and dishevelled leaves. There was no door on this building but according to the lamas there was no need for anyone to get inside anyway. Having said this, one could climb in through the opening, if one was determined to do so. The hole was not particularly deep, thus it would have been relatively easy to climb out again. The lamas, however, made sure that no one attempted such a thing. The dry well was so stuffed with abandoned books that there was not an inch of space to step on. Accordingly, if someone happened to climb in, he would unavoidably step on some books, which have been an unforgiveable blasphemy in the eyes of the lamas, punishable in the most severe way.²¹

If the Dunhuang cave does represent a similar practice of manuscript disposal, we might expect it to be linked to a local monastery. Stein himself

²⁰ Ligeti 1934: 391.

²¹ Ligeti 1934: 471–472. This account is interesting in part because Rong Xinjiang 2000 argues that the Dunhuang cave is too large to be considered a repository for damaged texts.

suggested just such a link when he noted that among the manuscripts stamped with the seals of Buddhist libraries, the most common by far are from the Sanjie monastery 三界寺, “thus clearly marked as having formed part of the monastic library which had supplied the great mass of the manuscripts deposited in the chapel.”²² The connection between the cave and the Sanjie monastery was further illuminated by a Dunhuang manuscript that had gone unnoticed till the 1980s. It recorded the aspiration of a monk from the Sanjie monastery called Daozhen 道真:

長興五年歲次甲午六月十五日，弟子三界寺比丘道真，乃見當寺藏內經論部不全，遂乃啓願虔誠，誓發弘願，謹於諸家函藏，尋訪古懷經文，收入寺中，修補頭尾，流傳於世，光飾玄門，萬代千秋，永充供養。

On [the 29th of July, 934], the disciple of Sanjie monastery, the monk Daozhen, having seen that among the contents of the storehouse of his temple the sets of scriptures and commentaries were incomplete, thereupon bowed his forehead to the ground and, with devout sincerity, took an oath and made a prayer: “I will go carefully through the cartons and storehouses of all the families, seeking after sold and decayed scriptural texts. I will gather them in the monastery, repair and patch them from beginning to end, and pass them down the ages. Their light will beautify the gate of mystery for ten thousand generations and one thousand autumns.”²³

With regard to Daozhen, Stephen Teiser pointed out that the monk had many connections to local lay people and was probably from the influential Zhang family that ruled Dunhuang after the collapse of Tibetan rule in 848. He later rose in seniority and acted as Precept Master, bestowing Buddhist precepts between the years 964 and 987. After this date there is no further evidence of Daozhen’s activity, and the year of his death must be close to 987.

Rong Xinjiang (Rong 2000) suggested that the contents of the cave represent the fruits of Daozhen’s work to restore and complete the library holdings of his monastery. As his colophon states, Daozhen collected unwanted fragmentary or duplicate manuscripts from other monasteries, and used them to fill gaps in the Sanjie monastery’s library, or to repair incomplete

22 Stein 1921: 822.

23 The manuscript is BD14129 in the collection of the National Library of China, originally from the collection of Count Ōtani. The work of Daozhen is discussed in Teiser 1994: 138–151. The translation here is based on Teiser’s own.

works in that library. Thus according to Rong, the existence of so many incomplete manuscripts in the Dunhuang cave can be explained as entirely due to Daozhen's efforts in collecting manuscripts from elsewhere. Rong also points out that many of the manuscripts are not incomplete, and seem to have been originally stored in the cave in neat bundles, with a classification system comparable with a Tang dynasty catalogue, the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T.55.2154).

At some point, Rong argues, the entire library of the Sanjie monastery was moved over to the Dunhuang cave and sealed. Thus for Rong, the contents of the Dunhuang cave represent an entire monastic library, and not just the cast-off manuscripts from such a library.²⁴ Rong's argument has been widely cited as a refutation of the earlier theories, but he is perhaps unnecessarily dogmatic in rejecting outright the theory that the cave was a repository for the disposal of manuscripts. It may be misleading to perceive the cave's function as split between two incompatible options of waste repository on the one hand and library storeroom on the other. In fact these uses may have overlapped. The cave contains many manuscripts that somehow fall in between the categories of waste and library holding; these are the hundreds of sponsored copies of Buddhist scriptures.²⁵

Manuscripts and paintings were constantly being commissioned by monks and donated to monasteries by lay Buddhists, for the sole purpose of accruing religious merit.²⁶ A good example of this is the large number of copies of a single Buddhist scripture commissioned by one of the last Tibetan emperors in the first half of the ninth century.²⁷ Once completed, these commissioned or donated manuscripts, often multiple copies of the same text, often had no further use. While some kinds of donated item – for example, food, shrine items and monks' robes – were essentially consumables for the monastery, and others – like bolts of silk – were financial assets, copies of scriptures had no further use, and their storage

24 Rong 2000: 272–273.

25 Rong's original article (in Chinese) was criticized in 1996 by Dohi Yoshikazu (1996), who argued that the manuscripts from the Sanjie monastery number no more than 200, a tiny fraction of the cave's holdings. He points out that another monastery in Dunhuang, Baoensi 報恩寺, was inspecting and restocking its library at the end of the tenth century.

26 We have another manuscript colophon describing Daozhen's own commissioning of manuscripts and numerous paintings. This is a colophon in Or.8210/S.5663, translated in Teiser 1994: 144–145.

27 On these, see Lalou 1954 and 1964, and Yamaguchi 1996.

would always have been an issue for monasteries, especially the smaller ones.²⁸

Thus one of the functions of Cave 17 at Dunhuang could have been to serve as a repository for such manuscripts. This is suggested by John Kieschnick in his study of Buddhist material culture in China:

In this context, the prodigious store of copies of the *Diamond Sūtra* at Dunhuang, virtually identical in content and originally belonging to only a few monastic libraries, begins to make sense: for the most part these are “receipts” for merit-giving transactions, rather than scriptures that were read.²⁹

The most compelling reason for seeing the cave functioning in this way is the fact that over a thousand copies of certain popular scriptures written in Chinese and Tibetan were kept there.³⁰ Another is the fact that the cave contains many manuscripts and paintings from the late tenth century, some of them apparently having been made only a few years before their interment and sealing in the cave. Some of the late manuscripts, and many of the paintings, are in a very good condition. Thus the presence of paintings and manuscripts in the cave that were complete and relatively new at the time of its sealing suggests that the storage of commissioned and donated items was another of the cave’s functions, right up until its closure.

Thus it may be best to approach Cave 17 as having multiple functions during the century and a half between its creation and its sealing. We can tentatively identify the following functions:

- A funerary chapel for the leader of the Buddhist community at Dunhuang, Hongbian. It is likely that manuscripts belonging to the monk were interred at the time of the cave’s consecration. Later, as a continuation of this practice, manuscripts belonging to, or connected with, other revered monks might also have been deposited in the cave.
- A repository for offerings of manuscripts and paintings. Since Hongbian’s funerary cave was a consecrated shrine, these could be considered relics of the dharma (*dharma-śarīra*), in the same way as manuscripts

28 On the variety of donations to Chinese monasteries, and their economic context, see Gernet 1995: 195–228.

29 Kieschnick 2003: 170.

30 This is particularly evident from Lionel Giles’ catalogue of the Buddhist manuscripts in the Stein collection (see Giles 1957).

interred in *stūpas*. The depositing of manuscripts could have happened at first in an *ad hoc* fashion, beginning with the odd manuscript left as an offering, and may have later included, as Stein suggested, votive offerings collected when various other caves were cleaned up.

- A repository for thousands of complete copies of donated or commissioned manuscripts, and some paintings, that could not be accommodated in the monastic libraries. These had no immediate practical use, but were still active as “receipts” for the merit generated by their donors.
- A storeroom for the monastic library of the Sanjie monastery, especially for the extra manuscripts obtained by the monk Daozhen to supplement the monastery’s library.

As there is evidence to support all of these functions, we need not choose between them, and we should keep all of them in mind when we look at the specific history of any one Dunhuang manuscript.³¹ Indeed, a multiple-function model for the cave may best explain its highly miscellaneous contents, that is, the many languages in which the manuscripts are written, the variety of conditions in which we find the manuscripts, and the presence in the cave of paintings – both fragmentary and complete – and other votive materials like paper flowers.³²

Finally, the question of why the cave was sealed has also excited considerable scholarly debate. Paul Pelliot suggested that the manuscripts were placed in the cave and sealed away to protect them at the time of the invasion of Dunhuang by Tangut forces in 1035.³³ There are problems with this theory however. Stein pointed out that the arrangement of the cave as he found it suggested a gradual and careful depositing of the material. Moreover, the Tangut kingdom was Buddhist, and would not necessarily have been perceived as an immediate threat to Buddhist temples and manuscript holdings. Rong Xinjiang has argued that as the latest date found on any of the manuscripts is 1002, the sealing-up must have happened soon after this. He offers a modified version of Pelliot’s theory, in which the cave was sealed to protect the contents – the library of the Sanjie monastery – from the Islamic Karakhanids. This group had invaded Khotan in 1006. Since there was a

31 We should also be open to adding more functions to this list. For example, the presence of many complete secular manuscripts (letters, contracts, histories and so on) in the cave may be explained by Daozhen’s activities in collecting material for repairing Buddhist manuscripts, as Rong (2000) suggests. On the other hand, the cave may have been used for the deposit of official manuscripts at other times and for other reasons.

32 On the paper-cut flowers from the cave, see Whitfield 2004: 268.

33 Pelliot 1908.

close relationship between Khotan and Dunhuang, Rong suggests that news of the invasion scared the monks of the Sanjie monastery into sealing up their manuscript collection and leaving the scene.³⁴ However, this does not explain why, when an Islamic invasion did not occur, no monks returned to retrieve the Sanjie monastery's library. The Dunhuang area certainly remained a vibrant site of Buddhist activity for several centuries.³⁵

We should also take into consideration the fact that after the library cave was walled over, the whole corridor of Cave 16 was painted with a new mural of Buddhist images. Such a treatment implies a considered and time-consuming process, rather than a sudden retreat. In fact, it is quite possible that no real or imagined invasion was behind the sealing of the cave. A more prosaic explanation could suffice: by the beginning of the eleventh century the cave was almost completely full and had outlived all of its uses.³⁶ The main motivation may have been that a patron was willing to sponsor a new set of murals for Cave 16. Most of the Dunhuang caves were subject to periodic renovation and repainting.³⁷ Such explanations could equally well explain why the contents of the cave were subsequently left undisturbed until their accidental discovery centuries later. As they retained their effectiveness as receipts of merit despite being inaccessible, there was no need to open the cave again, and in time it was forgotten. Other caves may have served a similar purpose in the centuries that followed. In any case, it is not our intention here to suggest a new theory for the accumulation of manuscripts in the cave, nor the reason for its sealing, but only to show that these related questions are far from being fully understood, and that we should consider

34 Rong Xinjiang 2000: 272–275. As Rong points out, there are a few manuscripts that date much later than the early eleventh century, but these appear to have been either collected from other caves, or brought into the library cave by Wang.

35 We should note here Fujieda's (1966; 1981) theory that the manuscripts were discarded in this way because they had been replaced when the technology of printing reached Dunhuang. The same idea has also been suggested by Jeffrey Broughton (1999: 97) in a work on the Dunhuang Chan manuscripts. This theory, however, is based on a presupposition that the advent of printing technology immediately makes manuscripts redundant. In fact this was not the case in China, nor in other Asian countries, where a culture of manuscript production existed alongside printed books for centuries.

36 By the end of the tenth century Daozhen, the monk who may have used the cave to store manuscripts for the Sanjie library, had almost certainly passed away. In any case, his project seems to have been primarily carried out in his early years, in the 930s, as the manuscript cited earlier shows. Imaeda (2008) has come to a similar conclusion regarding the sealing of the cave.

37 See Fan Jinshi 2010 for details of the renovation of various caves, and see esp. 198–199 on Caves 16 and 17.

a variety of possibilities when we are discussing the history and social context of any one Dunhuang manuscript.

2.4 The question of forgery

In recent decades, several scholars have explored the issue of forgeries among the Dunhuang manuscripts. Though there are only a very few clear examples of forgeries among the manuscripts, it is clear that a motivation to produce forgeries existed after foreigners began to pay relatively large sums to acquire the manuscripts. While Stein and Pelliot clearly acquired their manuscripts from the cave itself, later explorers (and indeed Stein himself on later visits to Dunhuang) bought manuscripts from third parties, with no proof of their provenance. The manuscripts suspected of being forgeries are all Chinese Buddhist scriptures and other transmitted texts, which were readily available to Chinese forgers in the early twentieth century. Some of the forgeries would have been copies of genuine manuscripts in which case a forged manuscript would have carried an authentic text.³⁸

Another problem is the contamination of the contents of the library cave before the first acquisitions. Stein, in his expedition reports, writes that Wang Yuanlu, the guardian of the cave, had already removed some of the manuscripts and rearranged those in the cave to some extent. He may also have deposited certain manuscripts that were not originally in the cave, gifts from pilgrims or manuscripts picked up nearby in other caves. This is suggested by certain Tibetan items, including a manuscript page with the watermark of a Russian papermaking factory, and a silk painting of the Buddhist deity Tārā that on stylistic grounds must postdate the closing of the cave.

Nevertheless, it is still generally accepted that the majority of the manuscripts in the Stein and Pelliot collections date from before the eleventh century, and the burden of proof remains on those who suspect forgery. In the case of the Daozhao manuscript there is little likelihood of forgery, as only one part of the manuscript, the *Baoenjing*, is a Chinese transmitted text, the kind of material that might have been forged. Even here, the Tibetan tantric texts on the other side are highly unlikely to be forgeries. In

38 Several papers on the issue of forgeries among the Dunhuang manuscripts, and techniques to distinguish between forgeries and genuine manuscripts are collected in Whitfield 2002. Note that these papers show the field to be in a very early stage, with little agreement on what would constitute proof of authenticity or forgery.

addition, we have a tenth-century date on the copy of the stele inscription discussed below and the Tibetan letters are convincing products of this period in Tibetan history. Finally, our palaeographical studies have shown that both the Chinese and Tibetan writing styles are similar to other Dunhuang manuscripts from the tenth century.

2.5 A multilingual society

One of the most interesting features of the Dunhuang manuscripts is their sheer linguistic variety, for they are both multicultural and multilingual. Situated as it was on a meeting-point of Silk Road trade routes, Dunhuang was home to people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, speaking a variety of languages. Thus it is unsurprising that some manuscripts are multilingual, containing two or more languages, and bearing witness to a high degree of multicultural interaction.

In between the Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang at the end of the eighth century and the closing of the cave library in the early eleventh century the two most important languages used at Dunhuang were Chinese and Tibetan. As we will see in Chapter 4, the Tibetan language was used by Chinese people as well as Tibetans, and its use survived long after the end of the Tibetan occupation as a kind of *lingua franca* in this region. The Daozhao manuscript is one of over two hundred Dunhuang manuscripts that combine the Chinese and Tibetan languages and scripts. The number of these texts testifies to a great deal of cultural and linguistic interaction between Tibetans and Chinese.³⁹ These multilingual manuscripts are of two main types: (i) glossaries and bilingual texts, (ii) Chinese scrolls with Tibetan texts written on the back.

(i) Sino-Tibetan glossaries and bilingual texts

Some of these manuscripts are apparently the work of multilingual monks. We have, for example, two scrolls containing the same Chinese Buddhist catechism, “The View of the Mahāyāna Madhyamaka.” One scroll has a Tibetan transliteration of Chinese, while the other is written in Chinese characters with interlinear Tibetan transliteration for difficult characters.⁴⁰ This second scroll shows that the Tibetan alphabet was used by monks, probably Chinese ones who were by far the majority in Dunhuang, as an aid to the

³⁹ This interaction is discussed in detail in Takata 2000.

⁴⁰ These are IOL Tib J 1772 and 1773 respectively. They have been transcribed, translated and discussed in Thomas, Miyamoto and Clauson 1929.

pronunciation of difficult Buddhist Chinese characters.⁴¹ The ease of using Tibetan for recording the pronunciation may also explain the existence of certain manuscripts containing Chinese sūtras written using the Tibetan alphabet – thus giving a phonetic rendering of the text.⁴²

A note to the bilingual catechism states that it derives from the explanations of a teacher called Go (Ch. Wu 吳). This is probably Go Chödrup, a Sino-Tibetan translator also known by his Chinese name Facheng 法成. Chödrup lived and worked at Dunhuang in the ninth century, and produced some of the translations from Chinese that are preserved in Tibetan canonical literature.⁴³ Chödrup and his students may well be behind many other Buddhist bilingual manuscripts from Dunhuang. We have, for example, a concertina manuscript with a commentary on the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* in Chinese. In between the lines of Chinese characters, the root text of the Tibetan is written in red. Chödrup's Tibetan translation of the Chinese *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* is found in the Tibetan canon, and he may well have used this very manuscript while working on his translation.⁴⁴ Indeed, Chödrup's influence on the Dunhuang collections is also to be seen in many manuscripts containing his translations into Tibetan, and summaries of Buddhist doctrines that he composed himself. A few of these manuscripts, in both Tibetan and Chinese, may be written by the hand of Chödrup himself.⁴⁵

We also find several manuscripts which are straightforward glossaries, or phrasebooks, for Chinese and Tibetan. These include several glossaries of Buddhist terms, which again seem to be the work of multilingual monks. Other glossaries help with more mundane matters – one is a list of kitchen implements, perhaps originally drawn up for Chinese cooks working for the Tibetan army.⁴⁶ Others give general terms for directions, types of people

41 Another scroll of this type is Pelliot tibétain 1262.

42 Two such copies of the *Sukhāvātīvyūha sūtra* are discussed in Thomas 1926 and 1927. The manuscripts are IOL Tib J 1404 and 1486. On the linguistic issues of Chinese texts written in the Tibetan script, see also Csongor 1960.

43 Opinions vary as to whether he was from Tibetan or Chinese extraction. Rong Xin-jiang (2000: 268) states that he was Tibetan, but Daishun Ueyama (1990) argues that he was Chinese. It is quite possible that he was of mixed parentage.

44 This manuscript, and Chödrup's translation of the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra*, are discussed in Ueyama 1990: 112–116. Two similar manuscripts are Pelliot tibétain 783 and 784, Chinese commentaries on the *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra* with interlinear notes in Tibetan (again, written in red ink).

45 Daishun Ueyama (1990) is of the opinion that Chödrup's own handwriting may be found in certain manuscripts.

46 Small military units in the Central Asian territories of the Tibetan empire were composed of two Tibetan soldiers and two foreign cooks. See Takeuchi 2004.

and animals, and useful phrases. These glossaries suggest that there was a continuing need for speakers of Chinese and Tibetan in the Dunhuang area to communicate with each other. The users of the phrasebooks and glossaries would not be multilingual themselves, but operating in a multilingual context, where they needed some command of both Chinese and Tibetan.

Table 2.1. Examples of Sino-Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang.

Chinese in Tibetan script

- IOL Tib J 1404 – Chinese *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* in Tibetan script (1) (Thomas 1926)
- IOL Tib J 1486 – Chinese *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* in Tibetan script (2) (Thomas 1927)
- IOL Tib J 1772 – ‘View of the Mahāyāna Madhyamaka’ (1) (Thomas *et al* 1929)
- Pelliot tibétain 1258 – Tibetan transliterations of titles of Chinese Buddhist scriptures (1)
- Pelliot tibétain 1259 – Tibetan transliterations of titles of Chinese Buddhist scriptures (2)

Parallel texts in Chinese and Tibetan scripts

- IOL Tib J 1773 – ‘View of the Mahāyāna Madhyamaka’ (2) (Thomas *et al* 1929)
- Or.8210/S.5603 + Pelliot tibétain 609 – Chinese commentary to the *Laṅkāvatāra sūtra* with marginal additions of root text in Tibetan
- Pelliot tibétain 783 – *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra* with interlinear notes in Tibetan (1)
- Pelliot tibétain 784 – *Yogācārabhūmi śāstra* with interlinear notes in Tibetan (2)
- Pelliot tibétain 1262 – *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* (chapter 25) with pronunciation of Chinese characters in Tibetan

Glossaries and phrasebooks

- Or.8210/S.2736 – Tibeto-Chinese phrasebook (Thomas and Giles 1948)
- Pelliot tibétain 1257 – 3 pages of Buddhist works and 7 pages of Buddhist terms
- Pelliot tibétain 1260 – glossary of names of kitchen implements
- Pelliot tibétain 1261 – Buddhist glossary (Fang-Kuei Li 1961)
- Pelliot tibétain 1263 – glossary including directions, months, peoples, animals, etc.
- Pelliot chinois 2053 – glossary of Buddhist terms (Tibetan in Chinese characters)

(ii) Chinese scrolls with Tibetan texts written on the back

Most of the manuscripts which contain different texts in Chinese and Tibetan are apparently re-used – that is, they were first used to write the Chinese text (usually a Buddhist *sūtra*), and then turned over to record one or more Tibetan texts. Thus these manuscripts, which are almost all scrolls, were a convenient source of paper, at a time when paper was, if not scarce, at least an expensive product. Where we have a date for these Sino-Tibetan manuscripts, it is always on the Chinese side, and this gives us the earliest possible date for the Tibetan side as well. These dates are generally in the tenth century; for example the almanac in Or.8210/S.95 dated to the year 956. One apparent exception is a series of secular texts that were written on the backs of Chinese *sūtras*. These include the famous manuscripts of the

Old Tibetan Annals and Chronicle, as well as several legal texts that derive from the time of the Tibetan Empire. In this case the Chinese scrolls were used to make copies of official Tibetan records, although this seems to have been done right at the end of the Tibetan dominion of Dunhuang and the surrounding region, perhaps with the aim of preserving some record of the departing Tibetan administration.

As we might expect, the Tibetan texts recorded on the backs of these scrolls generally have a clear practical use. The largest portion of the Tibetan texts are oriented toward tantric rituals. There are numerous ritual texts containing mantras and *dhāraṇīs*, which could be rendered into Tibetan more easily than Chinese. In some cases only the mantra has been written in Tibetan in an otherwise Chinese text. There are also short prayers of confession or aspiration, which would have formed part of many Buddhist rituals.

After these tantric texts we find that the related arts of divination and medicine are the best represented in the Sino-Tibetan manuscripts. Again, these are texts with an immediate practical application. Another interesting aspect of these Tibetan texts is that they are rarely found in Chinese. This is especially true for the tantric material. It is likely that many of these Tibetan writings were written by local Chinese Buddhists, using the Tibetan lan-

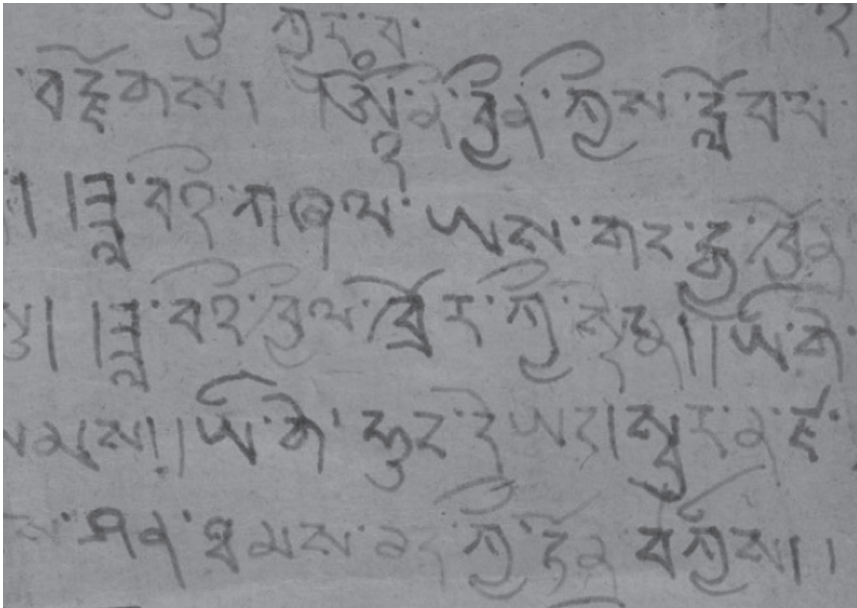


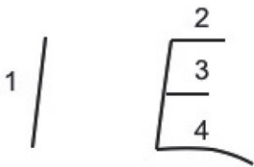
Fig. 2 IOL Tib J 716: an example of crude Tibetan writing on the back of a Chinese sūtra.

guage and script because it was a more accurate way to record and use these tantric, medical and divinatory texts. This is confirmed by the writing styles found in many of these Tibetan texts, which are often crudely formed and contain examples of non-standard ways of constructing letters (Figure 2).

It is likely that this kind of writing was produced by writers who learned the Tibetan alphabet informally, probably through copying the letters on other manuscripts. The faults in these handwritings are those of writers who have copied the form of the letter without having been taught the correct way of constructing it. Tibetan, like most writing systems has strict rules about the order and direction of the strokes that make up its letters. This means that even when writing at speed, a scribe's handwriting will be legible to a practised reader. On the other hand, when a scribe adopts a nonstandard stroke order and direction, his or her letters may take on quite idiosyncratic forms, and will rarely achieve the formal elegance of a taught hand.

In recent years there have been several cross-cultural studies of the acquisition of a second handwriting. One such study has shown the results of such self-taught writing in Japanese schoolchildren asked to write English letters without formal guidance. The results are inelegant, idiosyncratic, and at times illegible.⁴⁷ Several other studies shown that when schoolchildren learn a second alphabet, the execution and general shape of the letters are affected by the formal characteristics of their first alphabet. For example, Chinese children tend to sequence their letters with the traditional Chinese method of sequencing horizontal strokes before vertical strokes.⁴⁸ In our manuscripts the same horizontal sequencing can sometimes be seen in certain letters – the letter *dza* being a particularly clear example.

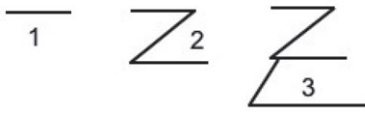
The standard stroke order of the headed form of the letter *ja*:



47 Sassoon 1995: 16, 21.

48 *Ibid.*: 45–54.

Apparent stroke order for the same letter in Or.8210/S.95:



We may tentatively conclude that many of these manuscripts in poor handwriting were written by local Chinese who had only an imperfect grasp of the Tibetan alphabet, having learned it without a proper instructor, and therefore without acquiring the correct stroke order. Why were these Chinese people – who presumably could more easily write in Chinese – interested in these Tibetan texts? The answer may be in the specific nature of the texts in these Sino-Tibetan manuscripts, which, as we mentioned earlier, are mainly tantric rituals, funerary texts and prayers for recitation. The profusion of Tibetan tantric manuscripts from the tenth century in the Dunhuang collections suggests (i) that tantric meditation and ritual was very popular at this time, and (ii) the vast majority of such texts were only available in the Tibetan language. This would have been reason enough for local Chinese – and perhaps other non-Tibetans – to make the effort to acquire some facility in written Tibetan, even without access to proper instruction in the script.

3 Buddhist Pilgrimage to the West in the Tenth Century

India, as the land of the Buddha's teaching, represented a constant source of inspiration and renewal for medieval Chinese Buddhists, a source which could always be relied upon to rectify textual and ideological corruption. By the tenth century, pilgrimage to India was a firmly established tradition among Chinese Buddhist monks. The travel accounts of celebrated monks who journeyed to India in search of authentic scripture – especially Faxian 法顯 (ca. 337–422) in 399–412, Xuanzang in 629–645, and Yijing 義淨 (635–713) in 671–695 – served as exemplars of the devoted pilgrim throughout the medieval period. The presence of manuscript versions of these accounts among the Dunhuang collections is an indication that they were well-known and widely circulated in the Western regions of the Chinese empire.

Some of the pilgrims who left behind travel accounts, like Faxian and Xuanzang, came to be revered in later times as great saints and explorers. However, important as they might have been, this reverence for a few major figures obscures the fact that theirs were not singular cases of daring pilgrimage but part of a rather large flow of traffic between the Middle Plains and Central Asia. Faxian and Xuanzang, along with a small number of other travellers, are known today primarily because they wrote down their experiences and these accounts were later considered worthy of transmission. Yijing, for example, in his *Da Tang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳 (T.51.2066) wrote about over fifty monks who travelled to the West but left no written account of their travels.

Clearly, most pilgrims were not engaged in literary activities, and the details of their journey, or even their names, were not remembered by posterity. Some, it seems, did write accounts of their travels, but without the necessary political and ideological incentives, these were not preserved. Examples of cases like these can be seen among the manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang, where we find several travel accounts which did not survive into later centuries. Some of these are historically attested but subsequently lost texts, like D.00234, very likely the long lost work of Wang Xuance

王玄策 called *Zhongtian zhuguo xingji* 中天竺國行記, or *Travel Records in the Kingdoms of Central India*. Others are previously unknown works, like Or.8210/S.383, a short description of a particular route to India with the title *Xitian lujing* 西天路竟.¹ In other words, the image provided by the transmitted literature does not reflect the true volume of pilgrimage going through the Hexi corridor. The transmitted texts give the impression that in every few generations there were a handful of brave monks who undertook the perilous journey to the West, and that these monks became famous upon their return. Manuscript evidence, however, suggests that pilgrimage to India was a much wider social phenomenon involving hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of pilgrims.

Of course, Buddhist monks were not the only people on the road. There was a lively commercial traffic along the routes leading westward from China, which are now popularly known as the Silk Road. Though there were many of these trade routes, one point at which they converged was the long passage known as the Hexi Corridor, in China's Gansu province. During the High Tang (618–755), when links with Central Asia were close, the Hexi corridor witnessed a significant amount of traffic going in both directions, and the major city of the region, Liangzhou, was a flourishing centre where merchants, soldiers, officials and monks could trade and rest before or after a long journey through the deserts to the west. After this, the Tang lost control of the Hexi corridor, and Liangzhou was controlled first by the Tibetan empire and then by a series of Tibetan rulers (see Chapter 4). With the loss of Chinese control over the region came a consequent decline in the number of Chinese monks travelling to the west.

The Buddhist pilgrims travelling from China to India increased again during the reign of the Song dynasty's first ruler, Emperor Taizu 宋太祖 (r. 960–976). In the fourth year of his Qiande 乾德 reign (966), Taizu issued a decree commissioning a large-scale pilgrimage, in which the justification of the project was that “the road through Qin and Liang has become passable, and thus it is possible to send monks to India in search of the dharma.”² While these words imply that Taizu had merely cleared the way for an existing desire to travel to the West, the unprecedented number of monks on this journey suggests that the movement was organized and coordinated by the new government. Moreover, even though the ostensible reason for the journey was to allow pilgrims to seek the dharma, the scale of the enterprise and its urgency immediately following a historical turning point suggests

1 We provide a full translation of this manuscript later on.

2 *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (T.49.2035: 0395b).

that the motivation in this case was more than a religious fervour on the part of the new ruler.³

Emperor Taizu seems to have had a keen interest in Buddhist pilgrimages. We know that the monk Daoyuan, who had left his home eighteen years ago and was living in Khotan following his visit to India, returned shortly after the beginning of Taizu's reign and that the Emperor queried him personally regarding the countries he had travelled through.⁴ The chief points of the Emperor's interests were the customs and habits of the people, plus the mountains and rivers, roads and settlements along the way. We can be fairly certain that the questioning was not merely a *pro forma* interview, as Daoyuan was commended for being able to recall every little detail down to the last one (*yi yi neng ji* 一一能記).⁵ Taizu's questions probed into issues of foreign geography and the customs of different peoples, rather than those of religion, showing that his interest was of a secular nature and that he was trying to obtain first-hand information for commercial and political purposes.

Indeed, it is unlikely that Emperor Taizu was ready to risk alienating the Confucian officialdom that lay at the base of his bureaucracy because of personal religious preferences.⁶ Quite to the contrary, he would have employed every available resource to strengthen his new administration. We should keep in mind that at this time he still did not have control over the entire country and political unity would have certainly been one of his highest priorities. One of the first measures taken by Taizu after he established the new dynasty was to lift the ban on Buddhism that had been decreed by Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 945–959) of the Later Zhou dynasty 後周 (951–960). In 967, he ordered the compilation of a catalogue of the Buddhist Canon. In the same year, he also issued a decree prohibiting the melting down of Buddhist bronze statues.⁷ In this he stipulated that all existing

3 With respect to the large group of pilgrims departing for India Huang Chi-Chiang (1994: 172, n. 28) states that “Taizu would never support the mission without political consideration. The ‘search for the dharma’ was most likely a politician’s rhetoric.” For the political background of Northern Song Buddhist patronage, see both Huang’s article and Vermeersch 2004.

4 *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 (*juan* 337).

5 *Ibid.*

6 Huang (1994: 161–163) describes that imperial patronage of Buddhism was acceptable to Confucian officials only as long as it benefitted the state. But the same officials did not approve of excessive temple constructions because these seemed to jeopardize the financial stability of the empire.

7 *Fozu tongji* (T.49.2035): 0396a.

statues in the various commanderies were to be preserved but, at the same time, explicitly forbade the casting of new ones.⁸

With these steps, Taizu set the course for both his own reign and that of his successors. Indeed, the Emperors Taizong 太宗 (r. 976–997), Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 997–1022) and Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022–1063) continued to support Buddhism, and the Northern Song was to produce the largest imperially sponsored translation and printing projects in history. The Song government not only aided these endeavours financially but also instituted a close control over them, in contrast with the significantly less centralized translation projects of the Tang. In 980, an order was given to establish an Institute for the Translation of Sūtras 譯經院 at the Taiping Xingguo monastery 太平興國寺 in Kaifeng. In 983, the name was changed to the Institute for Spreading the Dharma 傳法院 and this was where the printing blocks of the first Buddhist Canon were shipped from Chengdu. Therefore, as Bowring (1993: 81) notes, the institute was home “to an event of major importance in the history of the printed word.”⁹ The translation and printing works culminated in the production of the monumental *Kaibao Tripitaka* 開寶藏, which was completed only after Taizu’s death.¹⁰

Taizu’s close attention to the details of Buddhism during his reign reveals that his primary role in this respect was the control of monastic communities, rather than devotional support for the spread of the dharma.¹¹ He seemed to have endorsed only those enterprises which he personally initiated or was able to control. He regulated the number of temples and monks, using a quota system, and also had the final word with regard to selection of Buddhist sūtras for the compilation of the Canon.¹² Therefore, as Vermeersch puts it, for Taizu Buddhism was “an integral part of the state-building project” and he utilized it in order to justify his “rise to power and claim to legitimacy.”¹³

8 *Ibid.*

9 Bowring (1992: 80) argued convincingly against the notion partly advocated by Brough (1964) that during the Northern Song the quality of the Buddhist translations declined.

10 On the imperially sponsored Buddhist textual projects during the Northern Song, see Huang Chi-Chiang (1994).

11 For the various measures of control instituted by Taizu, see Huang (1994: 158–160).

12 Vermeersch 2004: 5.

13 *Ibid.* 9.

3.1 The route of the Chinese pilgrim monk

The second of the letters of passage in the Daozhao manuscript describes the route of the pilgrim, going into detail only in the region that is represented by the other letters on the scroll. This itinerary is unusual in the sense that it was itself created on the journey, and that it functioned as a travel document.

1. Wutaishan 五台山

The pilgrim's starting-point, the famous monastic complex of Wutaishan, was itself a major pilgrimage site. Tibetan Buddhists travelled to Wutaishan from the eighth century onwards, and our pilgrim monk may well have had the opportunity to meet Tibetans before making his journey.¹⁴ If this pilgrim was part of the large group commissioned by Emperor Taizu in 966 to travel to India, it is possible that he initially departed from Kaifeng, the Northern Song capital. Although going north to Wutaishan would have been a major detour, the holy mountains would have been a reasonable starting point for a pilgrimage.¹⁵

2. Hezhou 河州

Hezhou is known to have been ruled by Tibetan families through to the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century.¹⁶ The “gold and turquoise buildings” (*gser khang g.yu khang*) mentioned in one of the letters may be an elegant phrase referring to the golden roofs and turquoise tiles of the town's monasteries. We see a similar phrase in the Chinese text commemorating the building of the Gantong monastery (Part C of the Daozhao manuscript), in which the temples are referred to by their colours, in one case red, and in the other vermilion and turquoise (see Chapter 6). In the *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 (T.51.2088), a work written by Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) in 650, Hezhou appears as a major stop along the pilgrimage routes to India. It describes the so-called Eastern Route originating in Hezhou and moving northwest across the Yellow River.¹⁷

14 On the early eighth century visit of a Tibetan to the mountain, see Beckwith 1987b: 9 n.30. For more on these early visits and the details of a ninth century Tibetan mission to the court of China seeking a map of the mountain, see also Beckwith 1983.

15 Of course, it is also possible that not all pilgrims had to be present at an audience with the emperor, or even that the list of pilgrims was assembled afterwards, once the edict had been issued.

16 Sperling 1990.

17 *Shijia fangzhi* (T.51.2088): 0950c.

The modern name of Hezhou is the Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture 臨夏回族自治州 with the city of Linxia 臨夏市 as its seat. There is now little Tibetan presence, and the town's population is predominantly the Muslim Chinese Hui people. The likely route of the pilgrim towards the next stop, Dantig, would follow the Yellow River Valley towards the west. At times this route becomes dramatic and somewhat dangerous as the river passes through high and steep gorges, including the famous Ji-shi Gorge 積石峽, which leads to the modern city of Xunhua 循化, near Dantig.

3. Dantig Shan

Surrounded by steep mountains, Dantig is still only accessible on foot. The route to Dantig from the direction of Hezhou requires a climb above a steep valley and along a mountain ridge, some five hours walking from the Yellow River Valley. From the other direction, there is a less precipitous route from the village of Khora. Dantig remains a popular pilgrimage site, famous throughout Tibet for its association with Gewa Rabtsel – the monk credited with preserving the Tibetan monastic code – and more locally for the legendary Gelong Achuda. The valley itself has a population of around seventy Tibetan monks, most of whom live in mud-brick houses on the valley floor.

The religious retreat site of Dantig features heavily in Tibetan narratives of the survival of the monastic code in the ninth and tenth centuries (see Chapter 4). In these narratives Dantig is said to have been the primary seat of Gewa Rabtsel. Some early Tibetan histories suggest the existence of Dantig as a religious site before this time. The history of Khepa De'u mentions it as one of eight famous meditation places at the time of the emperor Tri Song Detsen (i.e. in the second half of the eighth century).¹⁸ Several Tibetan histories also mention a monastery at Dantig as one of those founded by the Tibetan king Tri Tsug Detsen (r. 815–841).¹⁹

Though the manuscript does not explicitly mention a monastery at Dantig, it is unlikely that the route to this mountainous site would be taken by a monk unless it was to visit a monastery where accommodation could be provided. At present the Dantig valley contains a single monastery built in the eighteenth century, and an associated school.²⁰ A pilgrimage trail

18 *Rgya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa*: 357.

19 See Uebach 1990.

20 The name is Bya khyung (see Stein 1959: 208–209, n.32–33). On the modern site, see Gruschke 2001: 59–62.



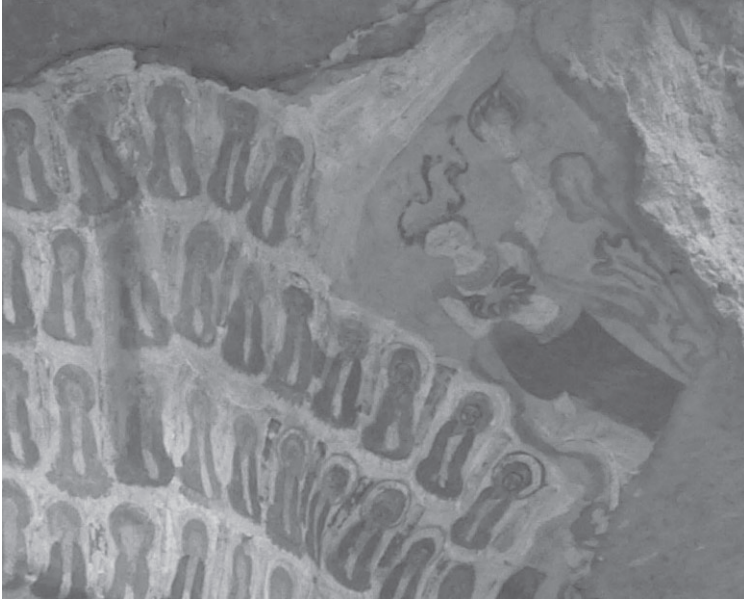


Fig. 3 Details from the old cave paintings at the head of the Dantig valley, showing (i) monks and flower ceiling decorations, (ii) a standing Maitreya with inscription and (iii) multiple buddha images and a female figure making offerings.

along the valley side leads to several cave temples, including the cave where Gewa Rabsel is said to have lived, and a cave dedicated to Gelong Achuda (on whom, see immediately below). Visiting the valley in 2010, we noticed the remains of old paintings on the rocks at the head of the valley. These paintings are apparently early, perhaps even dating as far back as the tenth century. They include large standing figures of Śākyamuni and Maitreya, and smaller monks and goddesses.

The reference in the Daozhao manuscript is the earliest occurrence of the name of Dantig in a documentary source, and proof of its existence as a pilgrimage site in the late tenth century. The name of Dantig has never been satisfactorily explained. It does not seem to be based on a Tibetan etymology, and looks like a transcription. In modern Chinese literature the name is found in various forms, but these all of these seem to be based on the Tibetan, rather than vice versa. A popular local tradition associates Dantig with a story in the *Jinaputra-arhasiddhi-sūtra*, in which the prince Arhasiddhi

is exiled to Dantig Shan.²¹ The existence of this sūtra in a Tibetan manuscript from Dunhuang, IOL Tib J 76, shows that the story, and the occurrence of the name of Dantig within it, was known in the tenth century.²²

The version of the *Jinaputra-arthasiddhi-sūtra* found in the Tibetan canon has a colophon stating that it was translated from the Chinese. In the Chinese version of the sūtra, *Taizi Xudana jing* 太子須大拏經 (T.03.0171), the name of the mountain is Tante Shan 檀特山 (MC: dan dok sren²³). This represents a Sanskrit name, perhaps Mount Daṇḍaka in the Gandhara region. Though we have no early source explicitly linking Dantig to the narrative of the *Jinaputra-arthasiddhi-sūtra*, the mountain named in the Arthasiddhi narrative seems to have provided the Dantig valley with its name. The association has certainly been well-known locally. There is also a cave temple, of uncertain date, in Dantig dedicated to Gelong Achuda, another figure from the Arthasiddhi narrative, who was said to have meditated in Tante Shan for a hundred years. His name in the Chinese versions is Azhoutuo (阿州陀 or 阿周陀; MC: ?a tsyuw da).

How and when the name of the mountain in the *Jinaputra-arthasiddhi-sūtra* became associated with the Dantig valley is not known. The Tibetan name Dantig is clearly based on the Chinese name of the mountain from the sūtra, yet this Chinese name is otherwise not found in connection with the Dantig valley. In later Chinese maps and other sources, the name of the valley is transliterated from the Tibetan *dan tig* in various characters, including: 丹笛 (MC: tan dek), 旦斗 (MC: tanH tuwX), 丹豆 (MC: tan duwH), and 旦兜 (MC: tanH tuw).

4. Tsongka

The route northward out of Dantig towards Tsongka is less precipitous than the route from the Yellow River Valley. The route would probably have rejoined the Yellow River, and have passed again through some major gorges. Tsongka is perhaps the most important site for the political history of the Amdo region. The earliest appearance of the name Tsongka is in the Zhöl

21 *Mdo smad chos 'byung*: 222–223. The story is similar to the famous Jātaka of Prince Vessantara. The Chinese version is at Vol. 3, No. 171 in the Taishō Tripitaka. On the variant Chinese versions of this story, see Durt 1999.

Other Tibetan works on Dantig that we are aware of date from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These include a guidebook to the caves and temples by Tshe tan zhabs drung 'Jigs med rig pa'i blo gros (1910–1985) and a poem in praise of the site by Rdzong dkar 'Jigs med dam chos rgya mtsho (1898–1946).

22 See IOL Tib J 76, f.10b.5.

23 Middle Chinese pronunciation is based on Baxter 2000.

pillar inscription in Lhasa, which is dated to 764 or not long after. The inscription records the Tibetan conquest of the Tsongka region.²⁴ It was later lost to the Chinese, and the *Old Tibetan Annals* states that Greater Tsongka (*tsong ka chen po*) was conquered by the Tibetan army again in the year 757.²⁵ Early in the following century a major monastery was established by the Tibetan emperor at Tsongka.²⁶ This may be the place mentioned in the Sino-Tibetan notes on Part A of the Daozhao manuscript as “the Tsongka temple” (*tsong ka’i gtsug lag khang*).²⁷ As with Hezhou, Tsongka is described in the Daozhao manuscript as being endowed with “gold and turquoise temples” (*gser khang g.yu khang*), almost certainly a reference to monasteries.

In the present day the site of ancient Tsongka is thought to be near the modern city of Ping’an 平安, just east of Xining 西寧. In Tibetan the area is now known as Tsongkha Khar.²⁸ The Yellow River valley is very wide here, providing an extensive area for cultivation to the south of the river, which would have been able to support a major settlement (as it does now). Because the area is now heavily populated, little remains of ancient Tsongka. One site that has survived in some form is Martsang (also known by the Chinese name Baimasi 白馬寺), a cave temple at the bottom of the mountains immediately to the north of Ping’an.

The site contains a large and unusual figure of Maitreya, which is said to have appeared spontaneously from the cliff face. Above this is a temple dedicated to the three Tibetan refugee monks and the two Chinese monks who are part of the narrative of the preservation of the monastic ordination lineage in the ninth and tenth centuries (on which, see the following chapter). The site, which can be accessed easily by road, is still visited frequently by pilgrims. There is also evidence that the site once contained other cave

24 Zhol Pillar, South inscription, l.34. See Li and Coblin 1987: 144.

25 The *Old Tibetan Annals* II (Or.8212/187, l.28–29); see Dotson 2009: 130. Uray (1991: 212–213) identifies Great Tsongka with the Chinese garrison of Heyuan Jun 河源軍. It is not clear which Tibetan military administration (*khrom*) Tsongka fell under; it may have been in Jarmotang (*dbyar mo thang*) as Hugh Richardson (1998: 169) suggests, or it could have been included in Khartsen (*khar tsan*) which was centred on Liangzhou, conquered the year after Tsongka (758).

26 See Uebach 1990: 396–397. This may of course have been an expansion of an existing monastery.

27 Another Dunhuang manuscript mentions a Chan teacher who came to Tsongka in the ninth century, instructing Tibetan students there (Pelliot tibétain 996: 1v.5). See Lalou 1939: 511.

28 Note that while all the early documents use the orthography *tsong ka*, this later changed to *tsong kha*.

temples. A single cave with ceiling murals of three maṇḍalas can still be seen high on the cliff face, along with square holes in the rock that seem to be evidence that structures were previously built into the cliff face.



Fig. 4 Abandoned cave at Martsang with three maṇḍalas painted on ceiling, and evidence of structures previously built into the cliff face.

5. Liangzhou 涼州

Travelling from Tsongka towards Liangzhou would require days of trekking in the high mountain range that rises up to the north of Tsongka. A more circuitous, but less strenuous route, would follow direction of the modern road back east towards Lanzhou 蘭州 before turning north to Liangzhou. Liangzhou was an important trading city from at least the fourth century AD. During the Tang dynasty it was a major gateway for the import into China of exotics from as far away as Persia and was famed as a centre of exotic arts, especially music and dance.²⁹ When the Tibetans conquered the Azha (or Tuyuhun 吐谷渾) in 663, many of them resettled in Liangzhou, and the Chinese created a new province in the region called Anlezhou 安樂州. A century later, when Liangzhou was conquered by the Tibetans in 758, it became a major centre of the colonial military administration (*khrom*) with the name Khartsen (*khar tsan*).³⁰ Although a new Chinese name for the city, Wuwei 武威, was imposed in 742, the old name of Liangzhou continued to be used by the Tibetans, Tanguts, and Mongols who controlled the city over the following centuries.³¹

During the late tenth and early eleventh centuries Liangzhou and the surrounding areas were dominated by an alliance of Tibetophone clans known to the Chinese as Zhelong 者龍.³² As we will see below, a very similar name, 諸龍, appears in the Chinese notes between the Tibetan letters of passage. Both forms of the name, which appears to be a transcription, may represent the Tibetan term *chos lung*.

6. Ganzhou 甘州

Travelling northwest out of Liangzhou towards Ganzhou, the landscape becomes more level, dry and dusty. Though the walking is less difficult, the dangers of the desert begin to become apparent. The city of Ganzhou was held by the Tibetans during the late eighth and early ninth century. After the

29 Schaffer 1963: 52, 106.

30 The *Old Tibetan Annals* II (Or.8212/187, l.33) has Leng cu khar tsan being attacked by the Tibetan army in the year 758. See the translation and edition in Dotson 2009: 130–131.

31 After the conquest of the Tangut kingdom by the Mongols, Liangzhou became the residence of the Mongol ruler Godan Khan, and it was here that the Tibetan lama Sakya Paṇḍita was received as a representative of all Tibet in the thirteenth century. Tibetan histories, which mention Liangzhou as the place where Sakya Paṇḍita met Godan Khan, refer to the town as *Leng cu* or *Ling cu*. See for example in the recent history of the Sakya school: Dhongthog 1976: 97.

32 *Songshi* 宋史: 14157. See also Dunnell 1996: 172–173.

end of Tibetan rule it was briefly under Chinese control before one group of the refugee Uighur Turks (who became known as the Ganzhou Uighurs) came to dominate the city in the late ninth or early tenth century. By the tenth century Ganzhou was, like most of the Gansu towns and cities, a multicultural city with Chinese, Tibetan and Uighur inhabitants. By the latter part of the tenth century the Uighur rulers of Ganzhou also dominated the neighbouring provinces of Suzhou 肅州, Guazhou 瓜州 and Shazhou 沙洲 (Dunhuang) itself.³³ Like Liangzhou, Ganzhou fell to the Tanguts in the 1030s, resulting in a large number of Uighurs fleeing south into Amdo. There were several monasteries in Ganzhou. The most significant seems to have been the Dayun monastery 大雲寺. However, the pilgrim's initial destination may have been the home of secular power in Ganzhou: just as the monk's destination in Liangzhou was qualified as the "palace" (*khab*), we see here the similar word *mkhar*, "castle" describing his destination in Ganzhou.³⁴

7. Shazhou 沙洲

Shazhou was the name of the prefecture containing the town of Dunhuang 敦煌, but the two names were often used synonymously. One of the major attractions for Buddhist pilgrims would have been the temple complex called the Mogao Caves 莫高窟, about 25 km southeast of the town of Dunhuang. The complex had begun with a few meditation caves in the fourth century, and by the tenth had grown into a vast complex of hundreds of elaborate painted temple caves carved into the cliffs.³⁵ Stein consistently

33 As Horlemann (2007: 85 n.15) points out, the Uighur ruler of Gansu styled himself *Gan-Shazhou Huigu Kehan Waisheng* 甘沙州回鶻可汗外甥 ('Uighur Khan of Ganzhou and Shazhou, Nephew of the Chinese Emperor') in a tribute to China in 977 (*Songshi*: 14114).

34 Interestingly, several contemporary place names in the region still bear this suffix *mkhar*, for example, Bayan Khar (*Ba yan mkhar*) and Dowi Khar (*Rdo sbis mkhar*), among others. See Gyurme Dorje 2004: 593, 597.

35 Stein described his first impression of the caves as he was approaching them in 1907 thus: "A multitude of dark cavities, mostly small, was seen here, honeycombing the somber rock faces in irregular tiers from the foot of the cliff, where the stream almost washed them, to the top of the precipice." (Stein 1912, v. 1: 23). Although Stein is sometimes credited with the discovery of the cave complex, it was a well-known site which did not have to be "discovered." Among western explorers, it was first visited by members of the 1877–1880 expedition led by the Hungarian Count Béla Széchenyi (1837–1908). Two of the team members, Lajos Lóczy (1849–1920) and Gustav Kreitner (1847–1893), published accounts of the expedition, including the visit to the cave temples. (See Russell-Smith 2000.) Stein (1912, v. 2: 20) himself acknowledged his gratitude to Lóczy for drawing attention to the significance of the cave complex.

called the complex in his publications the “caves of the thousand Buddhas” (i.e. *Qianfodong* 千佛洞). This is of course the source of the present manuscript, and therefore represents the end of the road for this document (at least before the twentieth century).

8. Śrī Nālandā

This is the great monastic university that was located in the (modern) Patna district of Bihar. From Faxian onwards, Nālandā was one of the prime attractions for Buddhist pilgrims travelling to India. An extensive account of the curriculum and the daily routines of the monks at Nālandā was given by Yijing, based on an extended stay there in the seventh century.³⁶ The monastery lost its eminence after the eleventh century, as Buddhism in central India entered a general decline.

3.2 Other pilgrims in transmitted sources and manuscripts

The date of 968 supplied in Daozhao’s colophon (Manuscript C) suggests that the monk travelling with these letters was part of the large wave of Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage to India during the second half of the tenth century. Only two years earlier 158 monks were dispatched for a pilgrimage to India under government support. The *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 records several such enterprises:³⁷ The excerpt below tells of the return to China of the pilgrim Daoyuan in the year 965 (on whom, see Chapter 7 below). This is followed by an account of a pilgrimage led by the monk Xingqin, whose request to travel was submitted to the emperor in the year 966.

乾德三年，滄州僧道圓自西域還，得佛舍利一水晶器，貝葉梵經四十夾來獻。道圓天福中詣西域，在塗十二年，住五印度凡六年，五印度即天竺也；還經于闐，與其使偕至。太祖召問所歷風俗山川道里，一一能記。四年，僧行勤等一百五十七人詣闕上言，願至西域求佛書，許之。以其所歷甘、沙、伊、肅等州，焉耆、龜茲、于闐、割祿等國，又歷布路沙，加濕彌羅等國，並詔諭令人引導之。開寶後，天竺僧持梵夾來獻者不絕。

In the 3rd year of Qiande (965), the monk Daoyuan, who was a native of Cangzhou, returned from the Western Regions. He had obtained

³⁶ Takakusu 1896.

³⁷ The same text appears almost verbatim in the *Songshi*: 14103–14104.

a crystal urn with Buddha's relics and forty boards³⁸ of Sanskrit sūtras on palm leaves, and came to present these [to the throne]. Daoyuan went to the Western Regions during the Tianfu reign period (936–942), spent twelve years on the road and lived in the five [regions of] India for a total of six years. The five [regions of] India are [the country of] Tianzhu. On his return, he travelled through Khotan and arrived [in China] together with an envoy from there. Emperor Taizu queried [Daoyuan] on the customs and habits of the places he traversed, their mountains and rivers, roads and settlements. He was able to recall each and every [detail].

In the 4th year (i.e. 966), Xingqin and other monks totalling 157 submitted a request, wishing to travel to the Western Regions in search of Buddhist writings. The permission was granted. Because they travelled, among other places, through the prefectures of Ganzhou, Shazhou (Dunhuang), Yizhou (Hami) and Suzhou; the kingdoms of Karashahr, Kucha, Khotan and Gelu;³⁹ then through the kingdoms of Purusapura and Kashmir, instructions were issued to all in these countries to provide guides for them. After the Kaibao era (968–976), there was an incessant flow of Indian monks bringing with them Sanskrit manuscript boards and presenting those at the court.⁴⁰

The account also adds that each monk received 3,000 cash as travelling expenses, showing that the pilgrimage was not only sanctioned but also sponsored by the central administration. Other sources record a slightly different version of possibly the same event, with a higher number of monks and an earlier date. Fan Chengda's 范成大 (1126–93) travelogue to Mount Emei 峨嵋山 describes a monk who was part of this pilgrimage:

業姓王氏，耀州人，隸東京天壽院。乾德二年，詔沙門三百人入天竺，求舍利及貝多葉書。業預遣中。至開寶九年始歸。寺所藏涅槃經一函四十二卷。業於每卷後，分記西域行程。雖不甚詳，然地里大略可考。

38 The Chinese word *jia* 夾 translated here as “board” denotes the pothi-style binding of Indian and Tibetan books. Medieval Buddhist accounts customarily use this term as a measure word to count palm-leave volumes brought back by pilgrims from India. It is often written in the Buddhist literature as *fanjia* 梵夾, or “Indian board.” The Chinese term *jia* indicates that the leaves were clamped together between two wooden boards. Teiser (1994: 47) renders *fanjia* into English as “Brāhma-style boards.”

39 Gelu refers to the region of today's Aksu. See note on Gelu in the manuscript *Xitian lujing* below.

40 *Wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 337.

世所罕見，錄於此以備國史之闕。業自階州出塞西行，由靈武、西涼、甘、肅、瓜、沙等州，入伊吳、高昌、焉耆、于闐、疎勒、大石諸國，度雪嶺至布路州國。又度大葱嶺雪山，至伽濕彌羅國，西登大山有薩埵太子投崖飼虎處。遂至健陀羅國，謂之中印土。

Ye's surname was Wang; he was a native of Yaozhou and belonged to the Tianshou Temple of the Eastern Capital (Kaifeng). In the 2nd year of Qiande (964), 300 monks were sent by imperial order to Tianzhu (i.e. India) in search for relics and palm-leaf⁴¹ writings, and Ye was among them. In the 9th year of Kaibao (976) he began his journey homeward. At the monastery there is a *Nirvāṇa sūtra* in a slipcase, in forty-two fascicles. At the end of each fascicle, Ye had recorded in instalments his itinerary to the Western Regions. Although it is not very detailed, one can still make sense of the general geography [of the places he travelled through.] This is a rare account and I record it here in order to supplement the lacunae in the history of various kingdoms.

Ye set off from Jiezhou westward, passing through the prefectures of Lingwu (Lingzhou), Xiliang (Liangzhou), Ganzhou, Suzhou, Guazhou, Shazhou (Dunhuang), etc. He visited the kingdoms of Yiwu (Hami), Gaochang (Kharakhoja), Karashahr, Khotan, Shule (Kashgar) and Dashi.⁴² He crossed the snow mountain and reached the kingdom of Purusapura. Then he crossed the snow-covered Pamir and arrived at the kingdom of Kashmir, from there westward he ascended a great mountain to the spot where once Prince Sattva threw himself off the cliff to feed the tigress. After that he reached Gandhāra, which is called the land of Central India.⁴³

41 The term *beiduoye* 貝多葉 refers to the leaves of the Palmyra palm (*borassus flabelliformis*) which appears in Buddhist literature either as *beiduo* 貝多 or *beiduoluo* 貝多羅, after its Sanskrit name *pattra*. The leaves of this tree were used for writing, and in this case the term “writings on pattra leaves” denotes Indian manuscripts in general.

42 In an article devoted to the identity of the kingdom of Dashi 大石國, Qian 2004 maintains that the Chinese name refers to the Karakhanid Khanate. Since we are uncertain about the correctness of this conclusion, we leave the name in our translation in Chinese.

43 *Youfang jichao* 遊方記抄 (T.51.2089: 0981c). Jan Yün-hua (1996, Part II: 144) raises doubts regarding the correctness of Fan Chengda's information because (a) it was written in 1177, almost two hundred years after the events; (b) no official document corroborates the high number of 300 pilgrims sent to India; instead, the official sources claim that a total of 183 monks had been dispatched to India from Song China prior to 1035. For a detailed English study of Fan Chengda's travel on Mount Emei, see Hargett (2006).

Regardless of whether these are two versions of the same event or two separate events, we can be certain that starting from the mid 960s an unprecedented number of Buddhist pilgrims passed through the Hexi corridor on their way to India. Most of them had to pass through Liangzhou. Indeed, in 966, Zhebu Gepi 折逋葛皮, a Tibetan prefect of Xiliang fu 西涼府 (Western Liangzhou) reported that over two hundred Uighurs and over sixty Chinese monks arrived through the Shuofang 朔方 highway, on their way to India to collect Buddhist sūtras.⁴⁴ They were given an escort onwards to Ganzhou. Since the date of 968 in Daozhao's colophon is only two years from this event, it is quite likely that our Chinese monk was one of those imperially sanctioned pilgrims, proceeding separately from the main group. If this was indeed the case, then the Daozhao manuscript would be the only firsthand evidence of this pilgrimage movement. We certainly see the same process in the letters on our manuscript, most of which involve local officials requesting an escort for the pilgrim.

Pilgrimage between India and Song China went in both directions. Alongside the Chinese pilgrims going West was also an equally significant number of Indian and Central Asian monks visiting China. Like the Chinese pilgrims, they often served as official envoys and were received accordingly by the Song court. As gifts they usually brought with them palm leaf sūtras in Sanskrit⁴⁵ and occasionally Buddhist relics as well.⁴⁶ For example, the Buddhist historical work *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (T.49.2035) by Zhipan 志盤 (fl. 1265–1275) states that in the first year of the Zhidao 至道 reign (995) a monk from Central India presented, along with some palm leaf manuscripts, a piece of the skull of the Buddha.⁴⁷

Buddhist “sūtras on palm leaves” were the most common items brought back from India; yet they were also highly valued. With regard to Chinese pilgrims, the term *qujing* 取經 (fetching or acquiring holy scriptures) was

44 *Wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 335. (A translation of this section appears in Section 6.3 below.) Of course, it is also possible that there were 157 Chinese monks and 300 was their number together with the Uighur ones. Tansen Sen (2003: 288, n. 41) suggests that the Uighurs mentioned here might have been merchants. He also raises the possibility that these descriptions of pilgrimages might in fact be referring to a single episode.

45 The term “Sanskrit” in these traditional Chinese accounts is of course an umbrella term for any Indic language used for writing Buddhist texts.

46 Jan Yün-hua (1966: 144–159) collected a total of 59 accounts ranging from 964 to 1078, including the ones cited above. Although each of these accounts usually records the activities of only one or two monks, in total they give ample evidence to the active interaction with India during this period.

47 T.49.2035: 0401b.

synonymous with making a Buddhist pilgrimage to the West. Virtually all accounts of Chinese monks returning or foreign visitors coming from India make note of the sūtras they carried with them. Their importance is signified by a record claiming that in the fourth year of the Chunhua 淳化 reign (993) the commanderies of the Western boundaries were instructed that both Indian monks visiting China and Chinese monks returning from their travels in the West had to report in advance the Sanskrit sūtras they carried.⁴⁸ Apparently, the administration wanted to have control over these texts. Still, the sūtras more often served more as objects of devotion than material for new translations and textual revisions. They were presented, along with the relics of the Buddha, to the court or a monastery where they were revered and stored, rather than being utilized as texts.

As for the route of the pilgrims, the road west led through the Hexi corridor; thus the monks were moving along the cities of Liangzhou, Ganzhou and Shazhou (i.e. Dunhuang). The Stein collection at the British Library includes a manuscript (Or.8210/S.383) from the tenth century containing a description of this route.⁴⁹ The text is preceded by the title *Xitian lujing* 西天路竟 (A Route to India),⁵⁰ and it maps out the entire road from Kaifeng to India (Figure 5).⁵¹

48 T.49.2035: 401a.

49 Gu Jiegang (1981) dates this manuscript to the end of the reign of Emperor Taizong (997) the latest.

50 The character *jing* 竟 in the title is generally understood as standing for the homophonous character *jing* 境, which is supposed to denote the word “boundary/territory,” as it is attested in the title of a number of other gazetteer-type manuscripts from Dunhuang. In some titles we see the character 鏡, also believed to stand for the same word. Li Bingcheng (1999), however, points out that beside geographical works the word in question also occurs in the title of many other texts, thus refuting the preference for reading the variants as 境. Instead, he argues that all three alternatives stand for the word *jing* (“mirror”) written in the conventional orthography as 鏡. If he is correct, then the word should be understood not as “boundary/territory” but as an “outline/summarized version.” There are, however, other geographical texts in the Dunhuang corpus which have the character 境 at the end of their title: *Shazhou cheng tujing* 沙州城土境, *Shouchang xian dijing* 壽昌縣地境, etc. See Zheng Binglin 1989: 226.

51 In the transcription, characters in parentheses indicate readings for ones immediately preceding them, either as a correction of obvious mistakes or as a means to provide a more familiar orthography.

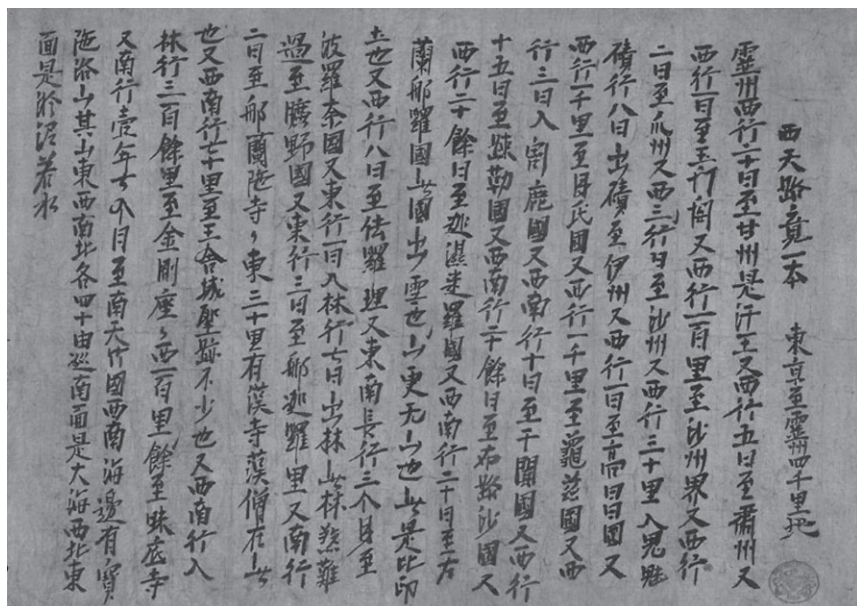


Fig. 5 Or.8210/S.383, *Xitian lujing* (A Route to India).

Or.8210/S.383

西天路竟 一本

東京至靈州四千里地

靈州西行二十日至甘州，是汗王，又西行五日至肅州，又西行一日至玉門關，又西行一百里至沙州界，又西行二日至瓜州，又西行三日至沙州。又西行三十里入鬼魅磧，行八日出磧至伊州，又西行一日至高昌國，又西行一千里至月氏國，又西行一千里至龜茲國，又西行三日入割鹿國，又西南行十日至于闐國，又西行十五日至疏勒國，又西南行二十餘日至布路沙國，又西行二十餘日至迦濕迷羅國，又西南行二十日至左蘭那羅國，此國出雲山也，更无山也。此是比(北)印土也。

又西行八日至佉羅理，又東南長行三個月至波羅奈國，又東行一日入林，行七日出林。此林繁難過，至曠野國，又東行三日至那迦羅里，又南行二日至那蘭陀寺，寺東三十里有漢寺漢僧在此也。又西南行七十里至王舍城，聖跡不少也。又西南行入林，行三百餘里至金剛座，座西一百餘里至昧底寺，又南行壹年七個月至南天竺(竺)國，西南海邊有寶陀洛山，其山東西南北各四十由巡(旬)，南面是大海，西北東面是淤泥若水。

A Route to India, in one fascicle

Four thousand *li* from the Eastern Capital (i.e. Kaifeng) to Lingzhou.⁵²

Travelling twenty days westward from Lingzhou you reach Ganzhou: this is [the domain of] the Khan; going west for another five days you reach Suzhou; going west for another day you reach the Yumen Pass; going west for another one hundred *li* you reach the border of Shazhou [commandery]; going west for another two days you reach Guazhou; going west for another three days you reach [the city of] Shazhou; going west for another thirty *li* you reach the Desert of Ghouls (Kumtura); after eight days you exit the desert and reach Yizhou (Hami); going west for another day you reach the kingdom of Gaochang (Kharakhoja); going west for another thousand *li* you reach the kingdom of Yuezhi;⁵³ going west for another thousand *li* you reach the kingdom of Kucha; going west for another three days you enter the kingdom of Gelu;⁵⁴ going southwest for another ten days you reach the kingdom of Khotan; going west for another fifteen days you reach the kingdom of Shule (Kashgar); going southwest for another twenty some days you reach the kingdom of Purusapura; going west for another twenty some days you reach the kingdom of Kashmir; going southwest for another twenty days you reach the kingdom of Jalandar, this is a country of high mountains; [then the landscape] changes to no mountains – this is the land of Northern India.

52 This sentence, consisting of nine characters in the original text, is written in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript and is probably a subsequent addition.

53 The kingdom of Yuezhi originally denoted the Kushan Empire which is obviously out of place here (Huang Shengzhang 1984: 5). All other sources that describe this route have Karashahr 焉耆 in this place, and Zheng Binglin (1989: 227–228) reads this place name as 丹氏, pointing out that it is a phonetically viable variant for 焉耆. Although the first character of the toponym is written in the manuscript in a somewhat ambiguous way and could be taken for either 月 or 丹, the character 月 appears later in the same manuscript (in the phrase ‘going southeast for a long time in another three months...’ 又東南長行三個月) written in a very similar way. While this corroborates that in this place the manuscript in fact has Yuezhi 月氏, it is still possible that it is an error committed on the part of the copier who was misled by the graphical similarity of the handwritten forms of the characters 月 and 丹.

54 The name Gelu 割鹿 is identified by Qian Boquan (2003: 20) as an alternate transliteration for 葛禄 and 葛邏祿, usually understood to refer to the Karluk tribes. The Karluks, however, were quite far to the northwest. Qian is correct in pointing out that the location described in the manuscript roughly corresponds to modern-day Baicheng 拜城 or Aksu 阿克蘇. Zheng Binglin (1989: 228) also identifies it with Gumo 姑墨, the Han name for the region of Aksu.

Going west for another eight days you reach Quluoli;⁵⁵ going south-east for a long time in another three months you reach the kingdom of Vārāṇasi; going east for another day you enter a forest; after seven days you exit the forest. This forest is extremely difficult to traverse but [after it] you reach the kingdom of Kuangye.⁵⁶ Going east for another three days you reach Nagara; going south for another two days you reach Nālandā monastery. Thirty *li* to the east of the monastery is a Chinese monastery with Chinese monks residing in it.⁵⁷

Going southwest for another seventy *li* you reach Rājagrha, where there are many holy sights. Going further southwest you enter a forest and after three hundred some *li* you reach the Diamond Throne. A hundred some *li* to the west of the Throne you reach the Meidi monastery;⁵⁸ going south for another year and seven months you reach Southern Tianzhu (i.e. Southern India). To the southwest by the sea there is Mount Potalaka, which is forty *yojana*⁵⁹ wide on its east, west, south and north. To its south is the great ocean, whereas on the west, north and east there is mud [spreading out] like water.

Because the text is preceded by a title, it is very likely that this was a known work which was once well circulated, though later it was lost. There is no reason to suppose that this manuscript is an autograph copy penned by the original author. There are three cases of reversed characters in the text, a common error committed by scribes in the process of copying which indicates that the manuscript is not an autograph composition.⁶⁰ The first sentence of the itinerary reads, “Four thousand *li* from the Eastern Capital to Lingzhou” – these words were added in a different hand from that used in the main text, showing that the route in the original text must have begun

55 We are uncertain of what the transliteration Quluoli 佉羅理 stands for and have not come across a fully fitting explanation in the secondary literature either.

56 The identity of the country of Kuangye 曠野 in terms of modern geography has not been positively established, even though it occurs in several travel accounts.

57 The Chinese monastery in this place is also mentioned in the record of Jiye’s travels (“Jiye Xiyu xingcheng” 繼業西域行程, *Youfang jichao* 遊方記抄, T.51.2089: 982a-982b).

58 The name of the Meidi monastery is unattested in other sources and thus at this point it remains unidentified.

59 *Yojana*, usually transliterated in Chinese as *youxun* 由旬 (although in this particular manuscript it appears as 由巡), was an archaic measure of length in India. Considering the vagueness of distances in this itinerary in general, it would be futile trying to reconstruct the actual dimensions of the mountain.

60 Gu Jiegang 1981: 92.

from Lingzhou. But the name of “Eastern Capital” for Kaifeng suggests that even if the text was written earlier, it was still in use during the early decades of the Northern Song.

The route laid out here is practically the same as that of the group of 157 monks who travelled from Kaifeng in 966 under the leadership of Xingqin 行勤. If we compare the individual stations from Kaifeng to Kashmir, the point until which we know the details of Xingqin’s journey, we find that although the *Xitian lujing* (Or.8210/S.383) is more detailed, the general route mapped out in these two sources is essentially the same (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Comparison of the itineraries of Xingqin and that recorded in *Xitian lujing*.

Or.8211/S.383 (<i>Xitian lujing</i>)	Xingqin’s route in 966
Kaifeng	Imperial audience (i.e. Kaifeng)
Lingzhou	
Ganzhou	Ganzhou
Suzhou	Suzhou ¹⁰⁹
Yumen Pass	
Shazhou commandery	
Guazhou	
Shazhou (Dunhuang)	Shazhou (Dunhuang)
Desert of Ghouls (Kumtura)	
Hami	Hami
Gaochang	
Yuezhi	
Kucha	Kucha
Gelu	Gelu
Khotan	Khotan
Kashgar	
Purusapura	Purusapura
Kashmir	Kashmir

This similarity of the itinerant stations led Huang Shengzhang to the conclusion that the *Xitian lujing* manuscript was an actual example of the “road-maps” Xingqin and his companions took with them on their journey.⁶² Although without concrete evidence this might be an overly bold assumption,

61 In the description of Xingqin’s route the city of Suzhou is recorded between Hami and Karashahr, whereas in reality it is located before the Yumen Pass. The *Xitian lujing* places the city in its correct place.

62 Huang (1984: 106) claimed that this particular copy was carried by one of the 157 monks sent to India during the Qiande reign period, a view that was later rejected by Qian Boquan (2003: 22–24).

it is evident that the manuscript describes, in a somewhat summarized form, the route taken by the large group of pilgrims led by Xingqin in 966. It is also unlikely that monks carried such manuscripts as “maps” because the itinerary is decidedly Hexi-centric, with the shortest distances and highest density of cities being between Ganzhou and Dunhuang. As we move away from this epicentre in either direction, the distances get longer and the description increasingly vague. The text begins with the long stretch of 4,000 *li* that separates Kaifeng from Lingzhou,⁶³ followed by a twenty-day march to Ganzhou. From Ganzhou on, we have sections that are only a few days apart, until we leave Dunhuang and enter the desert. Then distances become longer,⁶⁴ with the final stage reaching the startling stretch of “one year and seven months” – the time needed to reach Southern India. Obviously, a map with such a low degree of precision would not be very useful while travelling on the Indian subcontinent. Therefore, it seems more likely that the *Xitian lujing* was written with the intention of being used not on the road, but specifically in the Hexi region. While it no doubt derived from actual accounts of Buddhist travellers who had made the long journey to India, in its current form it was probably intended for educational purposes or simply as a record of information similar to those in geographical gazetteers.

Beside the itineraries found in manuscripts and transmitted literature, there is also a small amount of material related to Buddhists travelling in the Hexi region. One such example, reminiscent of the Tibetan letters of passage carried along by our monk, is manuscript Or.8210/S.529 which contains a group of six letters of a pilgrim who was passing through Lingzhou on his way to India in 924 (Figure 3.2). The letters and the colophon identify him as the monk Guiwen 歸文 from the Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺 in Dingzhou 定州. One of the letters, most likely the first one, states that he was travelling to India to acquire manuscripts on an imperial mandate.⁶⁵ Rong Xinjiang (1991: 959) points out that this is a first-hand evidence for an event unrecorded in historical sources, namely, that in the first year of the Tongguang 同光 reign (923) Emperor Zhuangzong 莊宗 (r. 923–926)

63 As we already mentioned above, the first line containing the stretch between Kaifeng and Lingzhou was written in a different hand and is probably a subsequent addition to the manuscript.

64 Of course, even within these longer stages the itinerary sometimes marks shorter segments, especially in the region of the monastery of Nālandā.

65 This letter appears upside down in comparison with the rest of the manuscript.

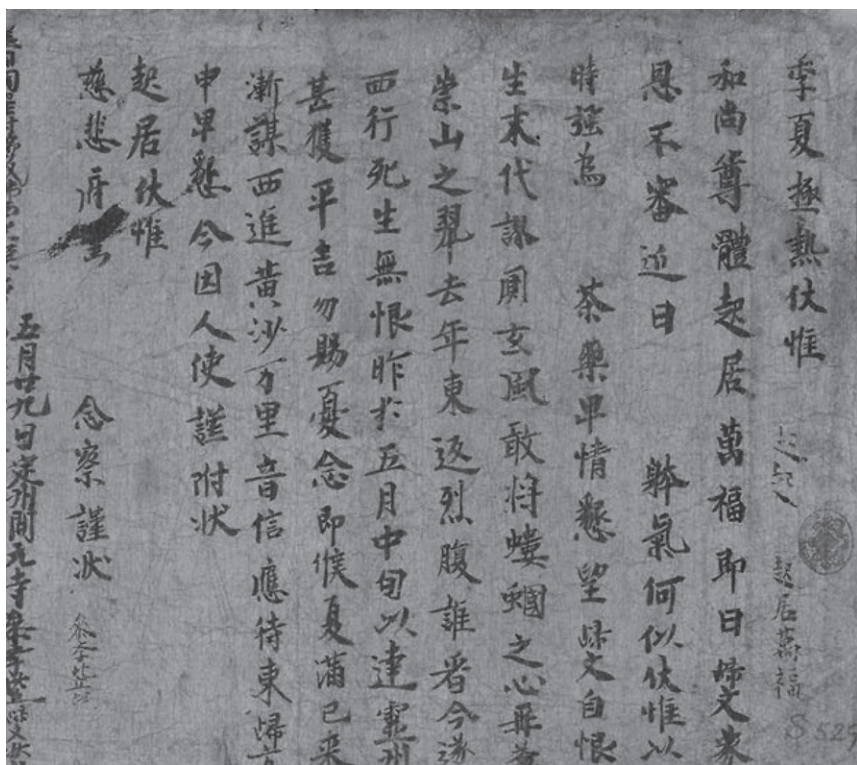


Fig 6. A portion of the manuscript Or.8210/S.529, containing the letters of the travelling monk Guiwen.

of the Later Tang 後唐 sent Buddhist monks to the India in search of scriptures.⁶⁶

The verso of the manuscript seems to have no direct connection with Guiwen's trip but describes some of the sacred mountains of the Tang empire, beginning with Wutaishan, and a general account of the introduction of Buddhism to China.⁶⁷ The presence of texts related to holy pilgrimage sites and monastic history is similar to the composite makeup of the Daozhao manuscript, which also includes a commemorative text on the Gantong

66 Logically, this also implies that there might have been other similar pilgrimage projects unrecorded in historical sources.

67 Demiéville 1971: 192. In his description, Jao Tsong-yi calls the side which has the description of Buddhist mountains the recto, unlike the IDP database where the side with Guiwen's letters is the recto.

monastery. Thus it is possible that this is not a case of a manuscript being reused, but rather that the texts on the verso of Guiwen's manuscript were in some way significant to his pilgrimage.

Guiwen wrote six letters to the religious and secular authorities along his journey to the West. Unfortunately, the names of the addressees are missing from the manuscript, which is why Rong Xinjiang (1991: 959) hypothesizes that these letters were in fact copies kept by the monk for his own record. But even from their slightly abbreviated current form we are still able to piece together the basic itinerary of the pilgrimage. Accordingly to Rong's reconstruction, Guiwen began his journey in the first year of the Tongguang 同光 era (923) but he failed and had to return. The next year he set off again with several other monks, including a certain Dequan 德全, and travelled westward "without regard to life and death," reaching the city of Lingzhou 靈州 on the 23rd day of the 4th month. There they bought two camels and proceeded farther west through the desert. We do not know how long it took Guiwen to reach Shazhou but his name comes up in another manuscript (Pelliot chinois 2638) as being in the city sometime between 933–936.

It is clear that in many ways Guiwen's manuscript is similar to the letters of passage in the Daozhao manuscript. Both monks were Buddhist pilgrims travelling through the Hexi corridor and the city of Dunhuang with the ultimate goal of reaching India in search for holy scriptures. Both carried with them letters addressed to influential people along the way, as a means of facilitating the journey. In addition, attached to their letters they also carried texts related to Buddhist geography of places (Wutaishan, Liangzhou, etc.) along their route. Guiwen passed through the Hexi region in the 930s, whereas Daozhao travelled some three decades later, during the early years of the newly founded Song dynasty. And why were Daozhao's letters, in particular, written in Tibetan? To answer this we turn in the next chapter to the historical background of the widespread use of the Tibetan language in Amdo and Hexi in the tenth century.

4 Tibetans of the Borderlands

4.1 The rise and fall of the Tibetan empire

To understand why the letters of passage gathered by the pilgrim Daozhao were written in Tibetan, one must know something of the development of Tibetan power in this region. For Tibetans, the area through which our pilgrim passed is known as Amdo or Domé. Tibetan involvement in this region goes back to the seventh century, when the Tibetan empire first came into being.¹ At the beginning of the century the region was ruled by a powerful kingdom known by the Tibetans as Azha (*'a zha*) and by the Chinese as Tuyuhun 吐谷渾.² During the fifth century the Azha ruled over much of the southern Silk Road, perhaps as far west as Khotan.³ The Azha acted as a buffer state between Tibet and China before their final conquest by the Tibetan army in 663. After the fall of their kingdom the Azha were incorporated into the Tibetan empire, and seem to have been gradually assimilated into Tibetan (and Tibetophone) culture. Over the same period, other, smaller tribes were assimilated in a similar process.⁴

By the middle of the eighth century, many of these gains were lost and the Tibetan empire struggled to expand its borders again, set against a strong Tang dynasty. Then in the winter of 755, An Lushan 安祿山 (ca. 703–757), a Turco-Sogdian general of the Chinese Tang army, rebelled against the

1 Reference to this region as Amdo only seems to have become common since the nineteenth century. In older sources the term Domé (*mdo smad*) covers roughly the same region. In his *Deb ther dkar po* (p.9), Gendün Chöpel suggests that the “A” in the name Amdo derives from the way the name was pronounced (presumably in Amdo itself). Note that in this book our use of *Amdo* generally signifies only the northeastern part of Amdo, comprising the areas to the north of Yellow River Valley and the east of Lake Kokonor.

2 The Azha are mentioned in many of the Tibetan Dunhuang documents. For a selection of these, see Thomas 1951: 1–38. On the Tuyuhun (吐谷渾) see Molé 1970. Christopher Beckwith (2009: 128) characterises the Tuyuhun as a “Hsien-pei Mongolic people.” Further studies of the Dunhuang manuscript sources for Azha history are Uray 1978 and Bacot 1956.

3 Beckwith 1987a: 17–18.

4 See Rong 1990–91.

emperor. The series of events set in motion by this rebellion nearly destroyed the Tang dynasty; although it survived, it never regained control of Central Asia. The Tibetan empire, newly invigorated by its king Tri Song Detsen (r. 742–c.800), took immediate advantage of China's troubles, pushing into China itself to take the capital, Chang'an, in 763. The Tibetans briefly enthroned a new Chinese emperor in the capital, and left to pursue China's territories to the west. The strategically important cities of the Silk Road were taken, one after another: Liangzhou fell in 758, Ganzhou and Suzhou in 766, Guazhou in 776, and Shazhou (the prefecture containing Dunhuang) in 786.⁵ The Tibetans governed these conquests through colonial military administrations known as *khrom*. Together with the area around Lake Kokonor (Qinghai Lake 青海), and the Tibetan forts in the Lop Nor desert, they became the province of the Delön (*bde blon*) or 'minister for pacification'. Thus the whole area was known as Dekham (*bde khams*), 'the pacified region'.⁶

Tibetan histories tell us that in the early ninth centuries the Tibetan monarchy sponsored the building of several monasteries in this area, including monasteries at Tsongka, Dantig Shan and Guazhou.⁷ After the assassination of the Tibetan emperor in 842 the succession to the Tibetan throne fell under dispute. Two princes, still children, were put forward for succession. One of them, Ösung, seems to have been recognised as the king by the Tibetan rulers in Dekham. This lasted only until 848, when the Chinese general Zhang Yichao 張議潮 overturned the Tibetan government of Dunhuang with his 'Return to Allegiance Army' (*Guiyijun* 歸義軍). In other parts of Hexi, the Tibetan rulers were not so easily ousted. Tibetan and Chinese sources tell of a battle that ensued in this area after the fall of the Tibetan Empire, famous in Tibetan histories as the first rebellion (*kheng log*) that ushered in an era of political fragmentation.

5 A number of dates for the fall of Shazhou/Dunhuang to the Tibetans have been suggested; the date of 786 is perhaps the most widely accepted. Daishun Ueyama (1990: 25–32) has reviewed the work of various scholars, including Zuiho Yamaguchi (1980b) and Chen Guochan (1985), who have argued for this date. A similar date of 787 is given in Beckwith 1987a: 152. Bianca Horlemann (2002) has argued that an earlier date between 755 and 777 is more likely (Horlemann 2007); however, this paper does not refer to the Japanese scholarship supporting the date of 786.

6 Dekham (*bde kham*) was also known as Delönkham (*bde blon kham*), 'the region [under] the minister for pacification'. On the province and its internal components, see Hazod 2009.

7 The historical sources dealing with the building of these monasteries have been studied by Helga Uebach (1990).

The fighting began in the region of Shanzhou 鄯州 (modern Ledu 樂都). The governor of Shanzhou was a Tibetan official from the Dro ('bro) clan, who had allied himself with the new Chinese authority. Other Tibetans in the area opposed submission to the Chinese. A Tibetan from the Ba (dba') clan, Ba Khobzher Legteng (*dba' kho bzher legs stengs*), raised an army that forced the governor of Shanzhou to retreat to an area under Chinese control in 850. Soon Shanzhou, and all of the surrounding area comprising northern Amdo and southern Hexi fell to Ba Khobzher, who seems to have intended to set himself up as a local warlord. The victorious army set about looting and destroying the area that had fallen to them, which led to rebellions by local people. In 851 Ba Khobzher travelled to see the Chinese emperor and petition for an appointment as a local governor, but he was rejected. A few months later Zhang Yichao and his Return to Allegiance army took Shanzhou, along with all of the other prefectures of the Hexi corridor, returning the whole region to Chinese rule. His dynasty was established at Dunhuang.⁸

The status of the Tibetans in this area immediately after 851 is something of a mystery. The last half-century of the Tang dynasty exerted no real influence in the region, and recorded little about the Tibetans. However, it is likely that there was a constant and significant Tibetan-speaking population in Hexi and Amdo throughout the period between the collapse of Tibetan rule and the resumption of Chinese and Tibetan historical records in the eleventh century. A local Amdo tradition has it that when the Tibetan empire collapsed there was no call for the return of the Tibetan army who occupied the cities of Hexi. Their descendents in Amdo were known as the *kamalog* (*bka' ma log*), meaning "not to return by order". This is recounted in the *Mdo smad chos 'byung*:

During the reigns of the dharma king Tri Song Detsen and his fourth son Desongtsen, armies were raised on all the borders of Tibet in order to stop the opposing armies. With many hundreds of thousands of Tibetan soldiers, the meditation centres of Central Asia (*bha ta hor*) were conquered. After that, nine heroes selected from the army for their ability were stationed at the border between Central Asia and Tibet. When they

8 This episode has previously been discussed in Yamaguchi 1980a and Petech 1994. The main Tibetan sources are the *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, the *Nyang ral chos 'byung*, and the two *Chos 'byung* of Mkhas pa Lde'u and Lde'u Jo sras (see bibliography). The incident is also mentioned in the *Tangshu* (Chapter 216/B). There are differences between the various narratives, not least in the forms of the names of the people involved.

asked, “May we return?” the message from the king was, “Our edict once issued is irreversible.” Thus the descendents of these nine heroes were called *Kamalog* (“not to return by order”). Much later, there arose many families of Tibetan nomads who were *Kamalog*. Even Kubilai’s great minister Sangha Ching seems to have been from a *Kamalog* clan. Those who became separated from the family line are said to remain in eastern Tsongkha, in the Kokonor basin.⁹

There may be a grain of truth in the popular legend; Zhang Yichao did not expel the Tibetan population from his conquered territories, and it is likely that the descendents of Tibetans originally from Central Tibet formed one part of the Tibetan-speaking population of Amdo and Hexi. *Kamalog* is now the name of a county on the border of Qinghai and Gansu provinces (in Chinese: Minhe 民和).¹⁰

In any case, the reassertion of Chinese rule over the whole of Gansu in the middle of the ninth century did not last for more than a few decades. The Uighur Turks, refugees from the breakup of the Uighur kingdom, arrived in Hexi, and by 894 had set up a new minor kingdom in Ganzhou. By this time it seems that both Ganzhou and Liangzhou had also been lost by the Return to Allegiance forces. While Ganzhou was in the hands of the Uighurs, the status of its eastern neighbour Liangzhou is not clear, but the whole area around Liangzhou may well have remained under Tibetan rule; certainly its population remained overwhelmingly Tibetan. Chinese sources report that in 998 Liangzhou had a population of 126,000, the majority of whom were of Tibetan stock.¹¹ In addition, Tibetan strongholds in the

9 *Mdo smad chos 'byung*: 223: bka' ma log ni/ chos rgyal khri srong lde btsan dang/ de'i sras bzhi pa khri lde srong btsan rgyal po'i sku ring la/ mtha' dmag dgag phyir bod yul gyi phyogs bzhir sgo srung bskos/ bod dmag khri phrag mang po khyer nas bha ta hor gyi sgom grwa bcom ste g.yul rgyal/ gnang spyad nas phyir byon dus dmag gi nang nas skyen po btus pa'i dpa'i bo mi dgu/ dmag mang po dang bcas hor bod kyi mtshams su bzha/ nged rnams ci tsam nas log yong zhus par/ rgyal po'i lung gis nged kyi bka' ma byung bar ldog tu med gsungs pas de phyin dpa' bo mi dgu'i rgyud pa la bka' ma log tu thogs/ der yun ring bas bka' ma log gi bod 'brog gi sde mang du byung/ seng chen gyi blon po sa nga ching yang sang rus pa bka' ma log yin zer snang/ de rnams kyi che rgyud las chad pa shar tsong kha mtsho sngon gyi mthil na yod par bshad pa de'i le lag yin la/

10 See Dorje 2004: 585–586.

11 Iwasaki 1993: 17. Here we should probably understand ‘Tibetan’ in its broader sense, referring to a wide variety of ethnicities that had adopted Tibetan language, and to some extent culture, since the region was first conquered by the Tibetan empire in

area of Lake Kokonor, like Tsongka, seem to have remained under local Tibetan rule.

In any case, we know that by the tenth century the Chinese rulers of Dunhuang were effectively cut off from communication with China. The isolation of Dunhuang is effectively shown by the fact that its people still used the reign title of the last Tang emperor for some years after the fall of the dynasty, apparently unaware of this catastrophic event. This isolation may have been due as much to the Tibetans to the east of Dunhuang as to the Uighurs.¹² The minor Chinese dynasties that ruled in Hexi recorded only the presence of Tibetan envoys at the Chinese courts, which apparently occurred on a regular basis for some time.¹³ The annals also report a few Tibetan military excursions: unsuccessful Tibetan attacks on Qinzhou 秦州 (modern Tianshui 天水) in 934 and Jingzhou 涇州 (modern Jingchuan County 涇川縣) in 939.¹⁴ These Tibetans are referred to in the annals as Tubo 吐蕃 (also pronounced as Tufan). This term originally referred to the whole Tibetan empire, but after the breakup of the empire signified primarily the local Tibetan rulers in the Amdo area bordering China. These battles suggest that local Tibetans were still struggling to expand their control over parts of Gansu well into the tenth century. As Qinzhou was at the far east of Gansu, and Jingzhou even further east than that, the Tibetans seem to have been to some extent successful in their military excursions.

We have better records of Tibetan activities in Hexi with the arrival of the Song dynasty in 960. The Song records give a tantalizing glimpse of the Tibetan rulers of Liangzhou in the second half of the tenth century. Two successive rulers appear after this time, Zhebu Jiashi 折逋嘉施 and Zhebu Yulongbo 折逋喻龍波, both of whom assumed the Tibetan imperial title Tsenpo (*btsan po*).¹⁵ In 966 Zhebu Gepi 折逋葛皮, a prefect in the Liangzhou administration, reported that over 200 Uighurs and 60 Chinese monks had been offered an escort towards Ganzhou (see Chapter 6 for more details). The date of this event closely coincides with the time of our monk's pilgrimage through the region, and although the letters in the Daozhao manuscript do not mention these particular names, Liangzhou was on the route

the seventh century. Christopher Beckwith (1987a: 171 n.183) states that Liangzhou remained under Tibetan control until the Tangut invasion in the early twelfth century.

12 Russell-Smith 2005: 62–67.

13 Davis 2004: 59–61, 79, 97.

14 The Tibetan raiders of Jingzhou are referred to as Xirong 西戎 (“western tribes/barbarians”).

15 See Iwasaki 1993: 18.

of this monk's pilgrimage, and at least one of the letters of passage was probably written there.¹⁶

By the eleventh century the Tibetan city of Tsongka came to the notice of the Song when a minor scion of the Tibetan royal family was brought there in order to establish a new ruling dynasty in the area. He and his descendents were known as Juesiluo 唃廝囉, a Chinese transliteration of a Tibetan word that can mean both 'prince' and 'bodhisattva' (*rgyal sras*). Ruth Dunnell has pointed out that, since this coup was orchestrated by the local Tibetans, it is likely that the Tibetans were already ruling the Tsongka region earlier in the tenth century.¹⁷ This is confirmed by the Daozhao manuscript, which contains evidence for the existence of Tibetan local rulers in this very area.

Later during the eleventh century the Tibetan kingdoms of Liangzhou and Tsongka came to the aid of the Song dynasty in the battle against the rising power of the Tanguts (in Chinese sources Xixia 西夏). The Song emperors conferred favours upon victorious Tibetan leaders. As the century progressed, these leaders were often ordained monks, and the most common favour bestowed upon them was the purple robe, a traditional imperial gift conferring honour upon Buddhist monks. The bestowal of the purple robe to Tibetan monks who assisted the Song dynasty's political interests marks the beginning of a trend in Tibetan religious and political life. Relationships between foreign political patrons and Tibetan Buddhist priests continued throughout the following centuries.

After Liangzhou and Tsongka were absorbed into the Tangut kingdom in the latter part of the eleventh century, Tibetan monks continued to forge relationships with Tangut rulers, and it was during this time that the role of 'imperial preceptor' was first conferred on Tibetan Buddhist monks. Then after the Tangut kingdom fell to the Mongols, this model of religio-political relationship, now conceptualised by both sides as a 'patron-priest' relationship was restored by Godan and Kubilai Khan. Again, in later centuries the same model was often adopted by later Mongol khans and Manchu emperors in their dealings with the Dalai Lamas. Thus the germination of religio-political relationships between Tibetans and neighbouring states with greater military power is of central importance to Tibet's political history. To the extent that the Daozhao manuscript sheds some light on the political

16 Immediately after this period, Liangzhou was ruled by Panluozhi 潘羅支 (which perhaps stands for the Tibetan name 'Phan bla rje), who came to power in 1001. It is testament to the wealth of Liangzhou at this time that he was able to send 5,000 horses to the Song capital as a tribute. See Iwasaki 1993: 18.

17 Dunnell 1994: 173–174. The Tibetan dynasty based at Tsongka lasted until around 1110, when it was subsumed into the expanding Tangut kingdom.

situation in Amdo and Hexi at the end of the tenth century, it may help us to understand the interaction between political and religious spheres and the beginnings of the ‘patron-priest’ relationship in these Sino-Tibetan border areas.

4.2 Tibetan as a *lingua franca*

After the fall of the Tibetan empire, the Tibetan language and script continued to be used in what had been the imperial district of Dekham. Writing in Tibetan must have continued in Liangzhou and Tsongka, where the Tibetans remained in power. More surprisingly perhaps, Tibetan writing continued to be used by non-Tibetans in the areas that were reclaimed by the Chinese well into the tenth century. Manuscripts demonstrating the persistence of Tibetan along the Silk Road have been discovered and discussed by Géza Uray and Tsuguhito Takeuchi.¹⁸ For example, some of the correspondence between the Chinese rulers of Dunhuang (the Cao 曹 family) and the king of Khotan in the second half of the tenth century was in Tibetan, and letters to the Uighur rulers in Ganzhou were also written in Tibetan.

Even more surprising is the fact that Tibetan writing was also used in letters between Chinese officials. For example, in Pelliot tibétain 1003 we have a Tibetan letter from one Chinese official in Yizhou to another in Shazhou. It does seem, as Uray suggested, that Tibetan was used as a *lingua franca* in the multicultural realm that was Eastern Central Asia in the tenth century. The Tibetan language also continued to be popular locally among non-Tibetans in Dunhuang; there are many manuscripts of Tibetan letters and contracts written between two Chinese parties. Significantly, many of these documents date not from the period of Tibetan occupation of Dunhuang, but much later, often over a century after the fall of Tibetan rule.¹⁹

Takeuchi has put forward several reasons for the popularity of Tibetan as an epistolary language well over a century after the collapse of Tibetan imperial rule. He suggests that Tibetan was “a shared code in people’s linguistic repertoire in addition to their native languages,” pointing out that this code had the convenience of being understood by most of the local ethnic groups, was relatively easy to learn (at least compared to Chinese writing), and was free from of any ethnic identity due to its use as a *lingua franca*. Thus, he tentatively suggests that Tibetan acquired a ‘fashionable’

18 Uray 1981 and 1998. Takeuchi 1990, 2004.

19 For discussion of these documents see Takata 2000 and Takeuchi 2004.

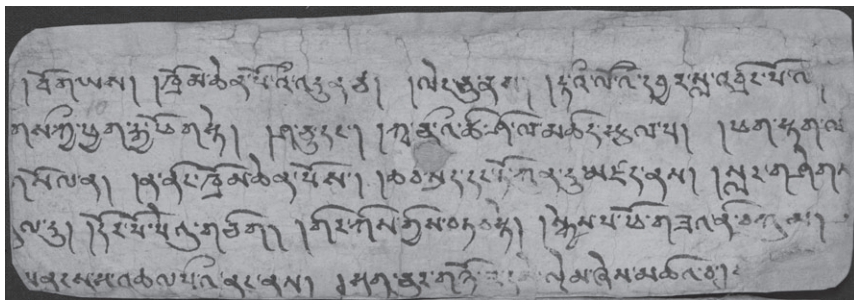


Fig. 7 A letter in Tibetan written after the end of Tibetan rule in Dunhuang (IOL Tib J 134).

image, a socio-linguistic prestige.²⁰ Takeuchi also suggests that the presence and activities of Tibetans in Amdo was actually increasing in the late tenth century. However, this presence may have been a constant throughout the ninth and tenth centuries, largely unnoticed by Chinese historians before the emergence of the Song dynasty in the second half of the tenth century.

In the religious sphere too, Tibetan writing continued, and indeed developed into sophisticated calligraphic styles. Buddhists, whether Tibetan or otherwise, produced manuscripts in Tibetan, mainly for personal use. In Dunhuang, Tantric Buddhism in particular was written and transmitted through the medium of Tibetan.²¹ The continuing popularity of the Tibetan language for religious texts must also be linked to a thriving Tibetan monastic community, which is evident in the Daozhao manuscript, and also described in Tibetan religious histories. Let us now look at what the latter have to say about religious life in the tenth century in Amdo.

4.3 Monks and monasteries in tenth century Amdo

The letters of passage on our manuscript are mostly addressed to high-ranking monks, and also mention several monasteries. There are no detailed accounts of Buddhism in tenth century Amdo in Chinese sources, but the

²⁰ Takeuchi 2004: 343. See also Tokio Takata's hypothesis that there was a social stratum of Chinese "that had been alienated from the study of Chinese writing" (Takata 2000: 65).

²¹ Dalton and van Schaik 2006.

region does feature in Tibet's religious histories, largely due to the role of a single religious figure, a monk known as Gewa Rabtsel (*dge ba rab gsal*) or Gongpa Rabtsel (*dgongs pa rab gsal*). This monk was remembered as the pivotal figure in the ordination lineage of the first monks who returned to Central Tibet to restore the monastic order in the late tenth century. Thus he is venerated for preserving the monastic line of Buddhist ordination through Tibet's dark age.

After the splintering of the Tibetan kingdom in the late ninth century, the monasteries of Central Tibet ceased to be home to living communities of monks. According to the traditional histories, this was due to a systematic persecution of the monasteries by the last Tibetan emperor, Udumten (*'u'i dum brtan*), known to the later tradition as Lang Darma (*glang dar ma*). In fact this emperor may have had little to do with the fall of the Buddhist monastic system that had been built up in Central Tibet by his predecessors. Recent scholarship has questioned the extent of the supposed persecution of Buddhism during his reign, and suggested other (for example, economic) factors.²²

Whatever the case may be, there is no doubt that a catastrophic collapse did occur in Central Tibet, affecting both religious and secular institutions. In a series of uprisings, the monuments of Tibet's former ruling powers were looted and destroyed, and the monasteries were abandoned by the monks. Most monks seem to have disrobed, though some tradition of non-ordained monastics continued in Central Tibet.²³ At this time, according to the traditional histories, several monks chose to escape from Central Tibet, taking their most important books of scripture with them. These books included, most importantly, the vinaya, vital for preserving the lineage of monastic ordination. This, according to tradition, ensured the preservation of the ordination lineage through the troubles of the tenth century.

We might wonder, however, whether these refugees from Central Tibet really were the sole preservers of the monastic line. Many monasteries and smaller temples were built in Dekham during the Tibetan empire. As early as the reign of Tri Detsugtsen (712–755), a temple was built in Guazhou, and, as we have seen, over twenty monasteries and temples are listed in later histories as having been established in Tibet's eastern ter-

22 See especially Yamaguchi 1996 and Karmay 2003.

23 See *Mkhas pa'i dga'ston*: 430.18–431.2. For a discussion of this and related passages in Tibetan histories, see Davidson 2005: 77–78.

ritories in the reign of Tri Tsug Detsen (r. 815–841).²⁴ These establishments must have suffered from the cessation of royal patronage by the middle of the ninth century, but they were far from the centres of power and the upheavals of the second half of the ninth century, and are unlikely to have suffered the same devastation as similar establishments in Central Tibet.

In any case, a number of refugee monks are said to have settled in Amdo.²⁵ The importance of these refugees for the tradition is that they passed on the ordination lineage to a young local fellow, who despite being brought up in the non-Buddhist Bonpo tradition, developed faith in Buddhism and came to the refugee monks for ordination. After his ordination (in which two Chinese monks are said to have participated) he was given the religious name Gewa Rabtsel.²⁶ He seems to have been an important figure in the religious scene, but the little we know about him is uncertain. There is no certainty about when he flourished, though one set of dates we have are 892–975, overlapping with the large-scale pilgrimage movement described in the previous chapter, and the date of our Daozhao manuscript.²⁷

Gewa Rabtsel is said to have spent a significant portion of his lifetime teaching at the monastic mountain retreat of Dantig, and ordained many

24 The Guazhou temple is mentioned in the Karchung pillar inscription; see Richardson 1985: 74–75. For the lists of temples established by Tri Tsug Detsen, see Uebach 1990. See also Davidson 2005: 88.

25 *Ne'u chos 'byung*; see Uebach 1987: 122–123: “Yo and Mar and a monk of Hor called Shākya Sherab, acting as their servant, settled in the rocky cave of Anchung Namdzong (*An phyung nam rdzong*). Chang settled in the temple of Khangsar Yaripug (*Khang sar ya ri phug*). Kwa Ö Chogdragpa, returning from Nepal [to Tibet] heard word [of the persecution of the dharma] and left on the northern road with a mule-load of abhidharma, settling in the temple of Palzang Kharchag Drilbu (*Dpal bzangs 'khar chag dril bu*). Lhalung Rabjor Maldrowa Yang and Rongtön Senge Drag left Yerpa with many books of vinaya and abhidharma, fleeing to Nagshö (*Nags shod*). After that, Lhalung settled in the temple of Dashö Tsal (*Zla shod tshal*) and Rongtön settled in Jang Chajerong (*Byang cha bye rong*).”

26 *Ne'u chos 'byung*; see Uebach 1987: 124–125. According to the *Chos la 'jug pa'i sgo* of Sönam Tsemo, there was a third Chinese monk, called Dā po.

27 Gewa Rabtsel's dates are not given in the earlier sources, but the *Blue Annals* states that he was born in a water mouse year, and died in a wood pig year, at the age of 84. See Roerich (1996: 63–67). Traditionally these dates are supposed to be equivalent to 952–1035, but this is skewed by the mistake made by all Tibetan historians in dating the death of Langdarma to 901, a whole 60-year cycle too late. Therefore we should move these dates back one cycle, giving us 892–975. Note that Roberto Vitali (1990: 62 n.1) suggests moving the dates back by another 60-year cycle, which would give us 832–915.

local men. Later histories make Gewa Rabsel the religious preceptor of the famous monks who brought the monastic ordination lineage back to Central Tibet, usually called ‘the six men of Central Tibet’. However this direct connection is rarely confidently stated in the earlier histories. The earliest surviving religious history discusses the ordination lineage brought back to Central Tibet with this statement: “Some say it was received from Lachen Gewa Sel. Some say it was received from Tülpa Yeshé Gyaltsen.”²⁸ The thirteenth-century historian Nelpa Paṇḍita argues that the ordination lineage was received from Drum Yeshé Gyaltsen.²⁹

This Drum Yeshé Gyaltsen is probably the same figure as the Tülpa Yeshé Gyaltsen mentioned by Sönam Tsemo.³⁰ He was a local man who was ordained by one of the students of Gewa Rabsel. He established a monastery which followed a strict interpretation of the vinaya, banning agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as luxurious cushions or carpets. Interestingly, he also banned political activities.³¹ Despite its strictness, Drum’s monastery seems to have been quite successful, and its ordination lineage became known as ‘the lineage of the ascetics’ (*btsun brgyud*). The histories also mention another lineage, ‘the lineage of the scholars’ (*mkhas brgyud*), derived from a monastery established by Nub Palgyi Jangchub and was distinguished from Drum’s by the fact that political activity was allowed, with the result that, as Nelpa Paṇḍita says, that the monks of this lineage “were of little use for religious training.”³² In his history, Nyangral Nyima

28 Sönam Tsemo, *Chos la ’jug pa’i mdo*: 318b.2.

29 *Ne’u chos ’byung*: see Uebach 1987: 128–129. The earliest source that confidently connects Gewa Rabsel with the monks who brought Buddhism back to Central Tibet is Nyangral Nyi Özer’s twelfth-century history (*Nyal ral chos ’byung*: 450). His position was also taken by Butön in the thirteenth century (See Szerb 1990: 60; Obermiller 1931–2: 202), and it is probably due to the authoritative status that Büton’s history came to have in the Tibetan tradition that the direct connection between Gewa Rabsel and the six men of Central Tibet came to be generally accepted, effacing the open-ended approach of Sönam Tsemo and the scepticism of Nelpa Paṇḍita.

30 The name Tülpa (*thul pa*) is probably a corruption of Dülwa (*’dul ba*), and a Dülwa Yeshe Gyaltsen (*’dul ba ye shes rgyal tshan*) does appear in some histories. This identification is made by Ronald Davidson (2005: 92), but he believes Dülwa Yeshé Gyaltsen to be distinct from Drum Yeshé Gyaltsen. However, Drum (*’grum*) is a clan name, while Dülwa an honorific indicating an expert in the vinaya. Therefore it is most likely that all of these Yeshé Gyaltsens are the same person.

31 The monastery seems also to have banned certain non-Buddhist funerary practices involving the inscription of syllables, an early Tibetan practice described in *The Testament of Ba*. See Kapstein 2000: chapter 3.

32 *Ne’u chos ’byung*: see Uebach 1987: 128–129. The story also features in the *Nyang ral chos ’byung*: 445–446.

Özer does not mention the specific differences between the lineages, but does suggest that the split came about because of “a little bit of worldly activity.”³³ Though inconclusive, these hints suggest that the main cause of contention between the two lineages was the extent of the monk’s political involvements. In any case, these discussions of multiple Tibetan monasteries and lineages suggests a far more widespread and flourishing monastic presence in Amdo than the later legends which focus exclusively on Gewa Rabsel and his immediate disciples.

The last stage in this chapter of Tibetan religious history concerns the arrival in Amdo of a group of men from Central Tibet, determined to receive monastic ordination and re-establish it in Central Tibet. This group, whose number varies in the different historical accounts, is generally held to have been led by two monks, known as Lumé (*klu mes*) and Lotön (*lo ston*). The date of their return to Central Tibet is also debated, though recent scholars have suggested that the dates of 978 and 988 given in two early histories are probably reasonably close.³⁴ In that case, given that these men are said to have spent some years studying in Amdo, their presence here coincides closely with the date of the Daozhao manuscript. It is interesting to consider that the fame of sites like Tsongka and Dantig in the late tenth century attracted both Tibetan and Chinese Buddhists from far afield.

Thus the picture we form of Amdo in the late ninth and tenth centuries is of a mixture of local monks and visitors, certainly enough monks to support several monasteries. Apparently some of these monks were involved in politics, to the extent that religious training was neglected. This factor may have split the Amdo sangha, in that some rejected the ordination lineages of those who engaged in politics. As we shall see below, our document suggests that

33 *Nyang ral chos 'byung*: 446.2–3. Nyangral also mentions a third ordination lineage, called Me (*rme*); unlike other sources, he apparently states that the both the ascetics’ and scholars’ lineages lasted and became famous in Central Tibet, though it is not very clear (446.5). In any case, it was Drum Yeshé Gyaltzen’s lineage of ascetics that was passed down to the six men of Central Tibet, and then spread in Central Tibet. This ordination lineage survived into the twentieth century in the Nyingma tradition as the Mindröling ordination lineage, and in the Gelug tradition as the so-called “abbot’s lineage of Lachen” (*bla chen mkhan brgyud*). The lineages from Gewa Rabsel were contested by some, who apparently objected to the practice attributed to the refugee monks and Gewasel of performing all three ceremonies of ordination in a single sitting. Some people defended this practice by reference to the sublime nature of Gewa Rabsel and his preceptors, and the dire straits in which the monastic ordination found itself in the period of fragmentation. Others concluded that this ordination lineage was a faulty one (see Dhongthog 1976 : 32a–b; and *The Mdo smad chos 'byung*: 15–26).

34 See Vitali 1990: 62 n.1 and Davidson 2005: 94.

some groups of monks in Amdo did have a close relationship with political and military matters. Our letters of passage certainly indicate the existence of several Tibetan monasteries in northern Amdo and southern Hexi region, giving some credence to the scene evoked by the earlier Tibetan religious histories, of thriving monastic communities comprising local Tibetophone peoples as well as refugees from Central Tibet.

4.4 Tibetan monasteries of Amdo in Chinese sources

Though there are no Chinese sources corroborating the presence of a thriving Buddhist community in tenth century Amdo, we find some discussions of the Buddhist temples of the region in sources from the late eleventh century. For example, there is a stele from the Guangfu monastery (in modern Min county 岷縣, Gansu) from 1084 that describes the Buddhism of the local Tibetans and the pious activities of their leaders, stating:

The Hexi Tibetans believe in Buddhism. Each tribe, in accordance with its numbers, selects a deity to worship and makes an image of it.³⁵

The stele goes on to describe the temple erected by local leaders:

The woods that had stood there were completely cleared, and in their place a magnificent Buddha-hall rose up. The doors to the entrance are kept open, and the gilded Buddhist image looks even more splendid. They then had a bell cast to announce the time, had the scriptures stored, and devoted themselves to the Buddhist faith.

Another temple is described by Li Yuan 李遠 in his *Qingtang Lu* 青唐錄:

About two hundred steps to the north of the ceremonial gate there is a large hall. The pillars and beams are coloured gold, and the throne is eight to nine feet high and set nine feet apart from where the people sit. [The throne] is surrounded by glazed tiles of blue lapis lazuli... Next [to the throne] there stands a golden Buddhist image which is several dozen feet high, adorned with pearls, and draped with a cover of birds' feathers.³⁶

³⁵ These passages based on translations in Iwasaki 1993: 34–35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

The presence of many such temples may explain why towns like Tsongka featured on the itineraries of pilgrims, despite their not necessarily being on the most direct route. As we will see in Chapter 9, the second of the Tibetan letters of passage, which details the Chinese pilgrim's itinerary, mentions "gold and turquoise temples" in connection with the two towns of Hezhou and Tsongka. This is strikingly similar to the description in the passages above of a hall with golden pillars and tiles of lapis lazuli.³⁷ Though the sources quoted above are over a century later than our letters of passage, the content of the letters suggests that similar Buddhist temples existed in this region in the tenth century. In Chapter 6, when we examine the stele inscription on Part C of the Daozhao manuscript and other related texts, we will see further references to gold and turquoise in the description of temples from an even earlier period.

Finally, the presence of Tibetan monks in the monasteries of Liangzhou is confirmed by another stele, again around a century later than our document. This is the famous Sino-Tangut inscription from 1094. The last part of the stele names all of the people involved in restoring the Gantong stūpa 感通塔 in Liangzhou, and their official titles. One of these figures, Wangna Zhengyu, is stated to be "supervisor of both Fan and Han monks at Gantong stūpa." Although Dunnell is uncertain about how to interpret 'Fan' 番 here, Kepping has argued that it must refer to Tibetans.³⁸ So the Gantong stūpa and its associated temple (Huguosi 護國寺) seem to have comprised a community of both Chinese and Tibetan monks. We also see this distinction between the cultural identities of Chinese and Tibetans in the letters of passage. Now, having discussed the historical context of the Daozhao manuscript, let us turn to an examination of the nature of the manuscript itself.

37 Note as well that the central temple in the monastery of Samyé in Central Tibet (which was completed in the latter part of the eighth century) is described in the early Buddhist narrative *Dbā' bzhed* as "like turquoise placed on a golden basis." See Pasang and Diemberger 2000: 68.

38 See Dunnell 1996: 96–97, 125, 131–2, and Kepping 1998.

5 The Structure of the Manuscript

The Daozhao manuscript is located in the British Library, where it has the number IOL Tib J 754. Like most of the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang, it was deposited in the India Office Library after having been brought to England by Aurel Stein. Then, during the First World War it was catalogued by Louis de la Vallée Poussin who assigned it the number 754. To this were added the prefixes IOL (India Office Library), Tib (Tibetan), and J (the letter signifying the Dunhuang manuscripts, as against those from other Central Asian sites). The India Office Library conservators dealt with the manuscripts in a way that would now be considered inappropriate, binding them into heavy leather volumes for archival. When dealing with scrolls, they usually separated them into their constituent panels, which were mounted on paper and bound into the volumes. One advantage of this process was that the conservators sometimes discovered ‘hidden’ parts of manuscripts. In the case of IOL Tib J 754, they discovered that the scroll actually comprised three manuscripts that had been stuck together (see Figure 8).

Initially, the scroll looked like a Chinese sūtra with some Tibetan and Chinese written on the verso (the back of the scroll). In fact, the Tibetan and Chinese written on the verso turned out to be separate scrolls, and the previously hidden recto of the Chinese sūtra was now revealed to be a series of Tibetan tantric texts (see Figure 9).

The three manuscripts now comprise:

- Manuscript A: A series of Tibetan letters, interspersed with notes in Chinese characters.
- Manuscript B: A Chinese sūtra with Tibetan tantric texts on the verso.
- Manuscript C: A commemorative text in Chinese concerning the Gantong monastery in Liangzhou.

All three scrolls share a joint history, but the way in which they came to be joined is not immediately clear. Let us look at some aspects of all three manuscripts that might help to clarify their relationship to each other:

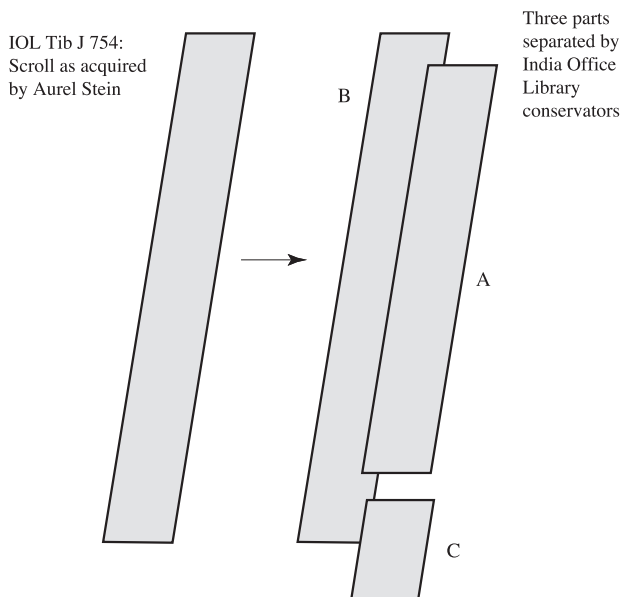


Fig. 8 The separation of the Daozhao manuscript into its components.

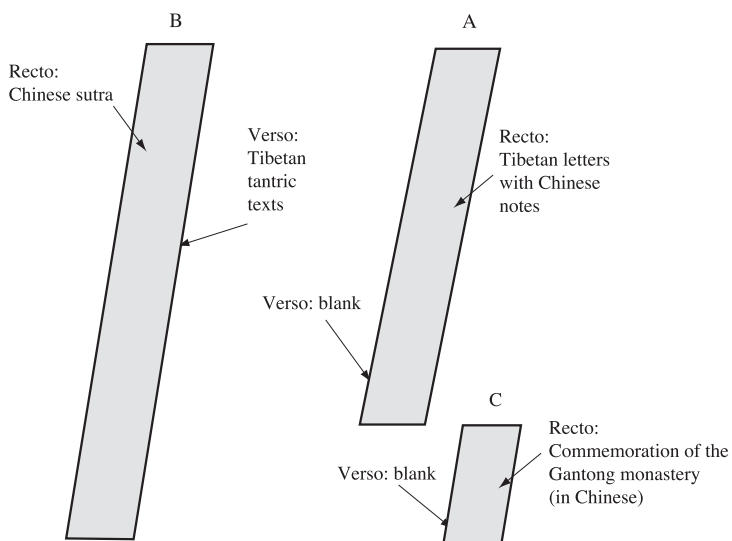


Fig. 9 The components of the Daozhao manuscript.

- (1) The letters of passage on Manuscript A are in different handwritings; they seem to be duplicate copies written at the same time as the originals, which would have probably been written on separate sheets of paper and folded in the standard way for official correspondence.
- (2) The Chinese notes written between the letters of passage indicate that this collection of letters developed over time. That is, copies of letters were added at each stage of the journey.
- (3) Unlike the letters, the Chinese notes are (with one exception) in the same hand; since the only person likely to have been in consistent contact with the scroll throughout the journey is the pilgrim, these notes were probably written by the pilgrim himself.
- (4) We know that Manuscript C, a copy of an inscription at Liangzhou, was written in Liangzhou itself, midway through the pilgrim's itinerary. This shows that the collection of Manuscripts A, B and C evolved as the pilgrim travelled.
- (5) Manuscripts A and C are composed of a characteristically Chinese paper, and may have come from the same source; they were probably brought from China by the monk. On the other hand, Manuscript B is composed of the kind of paper that was made in the Gansu area, and was probably acquired by the monk somewhere between Lanzhou and Dunhuang, i.e. on the part of the journey that is covered by the letters on Manuscript A.¹
- (6) It seems that Manuscript B was used as backing for Manuscripts A and C, for the following reasons: (i) B is an incomplete sūtra scroll, so there is no clear reason for backing it; (ii) B is composed of relatively strong paper, while A is very fragile; (iii) A and C, as we will show below, have a shared history and may have been written by the same person; they seem to have been deliberately preserved together by attachment to B; (iv) A and C were pasted with their written sides facing outward, rather than inward; if they had been used for backing, they should have been pasted onto B with their blank sides facing outward.

Based on these points, it seems that the three parts of the scroll were assembled before they arrived at their final destination. The person who assembled them would almost certainly have been the one who travelled with them, that is, the pilgrim. We now turn to a brief analysis of the main codicological and palaeographical features of the three manuscripts.

¹ We would like to thank Agnieszka Helman-Ważny for carrying out microscopic paper fibre analysis on the manuscript.

5.1 Manuscript A

Dimensions: 24 x 252 cm
 Laid lines: 6 / 1 cm
 Chain lines: 4–5 cm
 Colour: pale cream
 Paper type: Paper Mulberry

The recto of this scroll (which is blank on the verso) contains Tibetan and Chinese writing on its top half, the bottom half being left blank. There are five separate sections of Tibetan writing, each one a different letter. The letters are all written in a different handwriting apart from the fifth, which is in the same hand as the fourth. The letter that appears at the top of the scroll is upside down in relation to the others. The fact that the letters are in different handwritings suggests that they were duplicate copies for the monk written by the same scribes who wrote the letters of passage. See Chapter 9 below for translations of the letters and a full discussion of each.

Between the Tibetan letters on the manuscript there are several lines of Chinese text written with a calamus. Some of the lines have been smudged and are now mostly illegible. Others are clearly visible but appear to be meaningless strings of characters. Only two lines before Letter 1 seem to be in the Chinese language. Between Letters 1 and 2 there are three lines of Chinese characters which can be positively identified as a Sanskrit *dhāraṇī*. The rest of the Chinese text has presented insurmountable problems to those who have previously worked on this document.

According to Enoki's catalogue, the Chinese scribbles are completely unrelated to the Tibetan text and are almost completely incomprehensible.² Enoki identified Tsongka as the only proper name that occurs in both the Tibetan and the Chinese. Thomas wrote:

It is possible that further light may hereafter be obtainable from the Chinese notes occupying the intervals between the letters. These however, are in themselves, as I understand from Lionel Giles, not intelligible and will have to be made out, if at all, on the basis of the Tibetan.³

In fact, it has become clear to us that all of the Chinese notes, apart from the first two lines in Chinese language and the Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* mentioned

² Enoki 1962: 265.

³ Thomas 1927: 548.

above, are phonetic transcriptions of Tibetan place names and personal names. For example, the Chinese text preceding Letter 1 mentions a Yongtan Chu 用檀畜 (MC: yowngH dan xjuwk), which is without doubt the “great master Yönten Chog” referred to in the Tibetan text of Letter 1. For more details, see our transcription of the notes in Chapter 9 below.

The notes, which are all in the same handwriting style, were probably written by the pilgrim monk himself. The monk seems to have been ignorant of the Tibetan script, which is not surprising for a resident of China proper, far from the borders of Tibet. He wrote down the names of people and places which he was given to the best of his ability in Chinese characters. This is why the difficulty of interpreting these notes defeated all those who previously examined them. The transcription system is not based on any standard, but is a system personal to the monk.⁴ In order to get from his Chinese characters to the Tibetan names underlying them we must reconstruct how the characters would have been pronounced by a monk in the tenth century. Then we must also reconstruct how the Tibetan words would have been pronounced in the Amdo region in the same period. Fortunately we have a few resources to help us to do this. For the Chinese characters on this manuscript, we have adopted Tokio Takata’s (1998) reconstruction of the Hexi dialect in the ninth and tenth centuries. For Tibetan pronunciation in tenth century Amdo we have used Roerich’s (1958) study of the Amdo dialect, as well as our own observations regarding the phonology of Tibetan in the tenth century.⁵

5.2 Manuscript B

Dimensions: 22–25 x 286 cm

Laid lines: none

Chain lines: none

Colour: yellow/brown

Paper type: Paper Mulberry (two layers)

recto: Chinese sūtras

The recto of Manuscript A, the side that was exposed before the India Office conservators separated the documents, contains part of *juan* 3 of the

⁴ For this reason the Sino-Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang (see articles by F.W. Thomas and Fang-Kuei Li in the bibliography) and the Sino-Tibetan treaty pillar (see Laufer 1914) are of limited use here.

⁵ See for example van Schaik 2007: 195.

sūtra called *Dafangbian Fo baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經 (*T.03.0156). The text is written in Chinese on a total of five complete and two shorter panels of paper, with the incomplete ones located at the beginning and the end of the scroll. The sūtra is executed in even calligraphy with a calamus, using the 17 characters per line format. About 11–12 panels are missing from the beginning of the scroll, which means that we only have about 30% of *juan* 3. The end is complete and accordingly bears the title “*Baoenjing, juan* 3” 報恩經卷第三. The text of the sūtra follows its standard transmitted version, only occasionally omitting or substituting individual characters. Judging from the completeness of this *juan*, we can safely assume that this side of the manuscript must have been written before the Tibetan texts on the other.

verso: Tibetan tantric texts

On the blank verso side of the Chinese sūtra, we find several tantric meditation instructions (*sādhana*) written in Tibetan in different hands. For detailed discussions of these texts see Chapter 6. Here we will just give brief summaries of the scroll’s contents:

- The first text is a *sādhana* of the deity Avalokiteśvara written in a neat hand in the book style that was common from the mid-ninth to the eleventh century.⁶
- The second text is a *sādhana* of the deity Vajrakīlaya, written in a much less neat hand. There are signs in this text that it was written down quickly from oral dictation.⁷
- The third text is a Mahāyoga treatise based on a maṇḍala featuring the deity Vajrasattva, and discussing various issues of meditative practice.
- The fourth text, which is short and missing most of the final line, but otherwise appears to be complete, is another *sādhana*.

Thus far, several manuscripts of Tibetan Mahāyoga texts have been dated to the late tenth century, and there is good reason to believe that most if not all of such manuscripts were written in the tenth century.⁸

6 See van Schaik 2006: 62.

7 See van Schaik 2007; Mayer and Cantwell 1994.

8 See Takeuchi 2004; Dalton, Davis and van Schaik 2007.

5.3 Manuscript C

Dimensions: 25 x 34.5 cm

Laid lines: 6 / 1 cm

Chain lines: 4–5 cm

Colour: pale cream

Paper type: Paper Mulberry

This single scroll panel seems to be the same paper type as Manuscript B. It is only inscribed on the recto, which contains a text commemorating the building of the Gantong monastery near Liangzhou. It is written with a calamus, bearing the title *Liangzhou Yushan Gantongsi Shengrong tian shangxia lai* 涼州御山感通寺聖容天上下來 (The Holy Countenance that descended from Heaven above at the Gantong monastery on Mount Yu, Liangzhou). The title refers to the prediction made by the legendary monk Liu Sahe 劉薩訶 about an image of the Buddha whose completeness or incompleteness would signify chaos or order in the world.⁹ The tradition of Liu Sahe was very popular in Dunhuang and depictions of it appear on several wall paintings at the Mogao caves.¹⁰

The attraction of this particular prophecy for our pilgrim, and pilgrims stopping at Liangzhou in general, may derive from the fact that Liu Sahe delivered it when he was passing through Liangzhou on his way to visit Buddhist sites in India. The story of the holy countenance referred to on Manuscript C continues with the appearance, almost a century after the prediction, of a headless statue, as a sign of turmoil in the world. Following the miracle, the monastery became a place of devotion visited by monks travelling to and from the West. In 636 Xuanzang also stopped here for a short while on his return journey from India.

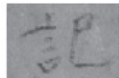
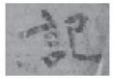
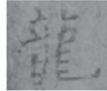
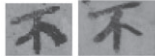
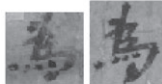
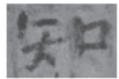
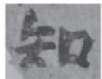
At the end of the text on Manuscript C is a colophon dating it to 968, and identifying the person who recorded the text as a monk by the name of Daozhao. It is significant that Manuscript C is written by a hand very similar to the Chinese notes between the Tibetan letters on Manuscript A.

9 Liu Sahe himself was of non-Chinese ethnicity, belonging to the Jihu 稽胡 barbarians. His monastic name was Huida 慧達, yet historical sources commonly refer to him by his secular name. That Sahe was in fact a phonetic transliteration of a foreign name is also reflected in the number of variants used for it: 薩訶, 薩呵, 薩河, 薩何, 率和. On Liu Sahe and his connection with Dunhuang, see Vetch 1981 and 1984.

10 See also the silk painting in the British Museum collection, pressmark Asia OA 1919, 1–1,0.20.

To illustrate this point, Table 5.1 shows some of the characters that occur in both texts.

Table 5.1: Comparison of handwriting on Manuscript C and in the first letter.

<i>Pilgrim’s first letter</i>	<i>Manuscript C (Commemoration of the Gantong monastery)</i>
	
	
	
	
	
	
	
	

Apart from some idiosyncrasies such as the *pie* 撇 stroke (丿) extending far beyond the main bulk of the character 為, the most important similarity between the two sets of characters is their clumsy balance. This is most apparent in cases where the character is composed of two major components, as the characters 記, 道, 龍, and 知. In these cases the two halves of the character are in an atypical and somewhat clumsy way disjointed, lacking dynamism or balance with respect to the entire character. While this kind of “disjointedness” is a feature often used in clerical script (*lishu* 隸書)

calligraphy, it creates an atypical effect when appearing in the normal script (*kaishu* 楷書). Such matching idiosyncrasies in the handwriting are an indication that the Chinese characters in the two texts were written either by the same hand, or at least by a group of people closely associated with each other. And let us not forget the other powerful evidence in favour of the link between the two handwritings, the fact that they were glued together to form a single physical object. While this may seem an obvious observation, it strongly supports that the two writings are related. Whether a product of the same person or the same community, the connection suggests that the date of 968 on Manuscript C is also applicable to the pilgrim's Tibetan letters.¹¹

As for the clumsiness of the calligraphy of the Chinese text, we should note that at this period the Chinese population in the Hexi corridor wrote with a Tibetan-style calamus, or hard pen (*yingbi* 硬筆) instead of the brush which continued to be used in China proper. Scribes skilled in using the calamus learned to retrace their strokes in order to imitate brush-written characters, and succeeded in doing this to the extent that modern researchers often have a hard time distinguishing the two.¹² We know from the Tibetan letters that our pilgrim was Chinese and arrived in the Hexi region from China proper, therefore it is quite possible that the seeming ineptness of the Chinese calligraphy on this set of manuscripts was due to the fact that he was unfamiliar with using a calamus for writing. Had he been given a chance to write with a brush, his calligraphy may have looked more accomplished.

11 On the application of the forensic techniques of handwriting analysis to the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts, see Dalton, Davis and van Schaik 2007.

12 Research on the use of calamus in the Dunhuang manuscripts is still in its infancy, even though it could have serious implications for dating of the manuscripts. It is now usually accepted that any calligraphy executed with a calamus dates to no earlier than the late eighth century when Dunhuang was occupied by Tibetan forces. For an early but influential case study of the use of calamus in Dunhuang, see Fujieda 1968. A recently published monograph-length treatment of the subject was done by Li Zhen-gyu (2007), who unfortunately chose to write for a general audience about this highly specialized topic.

6 From the Gantong Monastery

Manuscript C, a copy of a stele inscription from the Gantong monastery in Liangzhou, is the key to dating the Daozhao manuscript.¹ Though it has been studied by several scholars, its relationship to the letters of passage has not been fully understood. Enoki Kazuo described the manuscript as “a statement in commemoration of the completion of the temple Kan-t’ung-ssû where the portrait of the first Emperor of Pei-chou (AD 556) was hung.”² Yet it is clear that Enoki did not realize that the term “holy countenance” 聖容 signified a statue of the Buddha rather than a portrait of a historical emperor. Due to the same oversight, he translated the title as “The portrait of the Emperor has come down from the Heaven to the Yü-shan Kan-t’ung-ssû Temple in Liang-chou.”

Some decades later a transcription of this text was published by Ma De, who characterized it as “a record of the restoration of the Gantong monastery from the 6th year of the Qiande era of the Song” 宋乾德六年修涼州感通寺記, adding a note that the actual site of the monastery is in modern-day Yongchang County 永昌縣. According to Ma, the site carries traces of a restoration that was effected around the time of Five Dynasties or the early Song, and this text is a record of that restoration.³ Ikeda On calls the colophon on Manuscript C the “colophon of the monk Daozhao in a miracle tale of the Gantong monastery at Liangzhou” 涼州感通寺靈驗記僧道昭題記.⁴ Hida mentions Ma’s transcription in a note at the end of an article and points out the manuscript’s significance for the study of the history of the Guiyijun period and the Cao family in Dunhuang.⁵ Finally, the chronology of Dunhuang during the Guiyijun period compiled by Rong Xinjiang

1 An early and much shorter version of this chapter has been published as Galambos 2008a. Since then, we have been able to make major improvements in reading the text on Manuscript C, and to considerably narrow the possible date of its composition.

2 de la Vallée Poussin 1962: 265.

3 Ma De 1994: 111.

4 Ikeda 1990: 501.

5 Hida 1994: 175. This note only appears only in the Chinese translation of Hida’s article; the earlier Japanese version (Hida 1994) does not include it.

and Yu Xin (forthcoming) includes the manuscript under the year 968 using the title assigned to it by Ikeda.⁶

6.1 Colophon and date

The manuscript has a dated colophon appended to the text, saying, “Recorded by the monk Daozhao on the 26th day of the sixth month of the sixth year of the Qiande era” 乾德六年六月廿二日僧道昭記之耳. Enoki (1962: 265) understood the sixth year of Qiande as referring to 577 but this is clearly a mistake as a number of factors corroborate that this is a Song manuscript and thus the date should be interpreted as 968. First, the manuscript was unmistakably written with a calamus – typically used to write Chinese only after the mid eighth century. Secondly, the monastery was initially assigned the name of Ruixiangsi 瑞像寺 (Monastery of the Auspicious Image) and was renamed to Gantongsi 感通寺 (Monastery of the Spiritual Response)⁷ only in the fifth year of Daye 大業 (609) when Emperor Yang 煬帝 travelled through here and decreed the name change.⁸

Another problematic issue is a date that occurs within the main text, which both Enoki and Ma De read as the ninth year of the Baoding era 保定九年.⁹ However, as Enoki pointed out, the Baoding reign period (561–5) only lasted for five years, so this is in fact an impossible combination. This difficulty, however, is simply caused by incorrectly reading the graph 九 as 九 (“ninth”), instead of what it is in reality: 元 (“first”). The character 九 appears twice in the same text, written as 九 and 九, and neither of these forms is identical to 九 (see Table 1). But if the graph 九 is read correctly as the character 元, the date becomes the first year of the Baoding era 保定元年, corresponding to 561. This not only solves the problem of having an impossible date but also corresponds to the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (T.52.2106: 0417c) which records that the Ruixiangsi monastery was established here in the first year of the Baoding era, that is, in 561.¹⁰

6 We are grateful to Yu Xin of Fudan University for providing this reference.

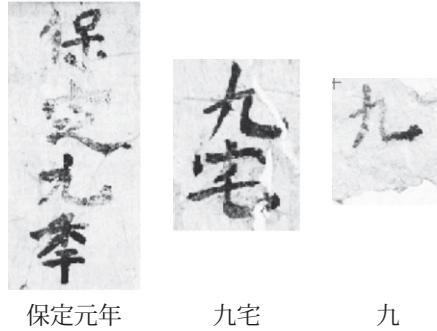
7 We use a more direct translation “spiritual response” for the word *gantong* in the name of the monastery. We should keep in mind though that this word also refers to Buddhist miracles, a fact that might not be immediately clear from its English rendition.

8 Although there have been at least three Qiande reigns in Chinese history, none of them corresponds to the date 577 given by Enoki. However, as we will see later, Enoki has made a fairly accurate guess at the date of the text (vs. the manuscript).

9 Enoki 1962: 265 and Ma De 1994: 111.

10 A complete translation of this passage follows below.

Table 6.1: Comparison of the characters 元 and 九 within the same manuscript.



6.2 The text

The text on Manuscript C consists of 16 lines, with 15–18 characters in each complete line. The first line comprises the title and the last, the colophon. The title, main text and the colophon were all written by the same hand. The text was clearly executed using a calamus, like the Chinese scribbles between the Tibetan letters on Manuscript A. Although the text is complete, some of the characters are smudged or hard to read. There are a number of variant character forms, some of them with inconsistent orthography even within the same document. For example, the character 年 occurs three times as 年, 年 and 年, the first two of which are the traditional *lishu* 隸書 forms consisting of the combination of 禾+千. Another example of inconsistent orthography is the character 無 which occurs twice, written as 無 and 无.

Below is the transcription of the text.¹¹ The blank squares inside brackets [□□□] mean that the context and grammar imply the absence of one or more characters from the text, most likely having been omitted accidentally during the process of copying. In cases where the use of a more accepted character is obvious, the latter is provided in parentheses, e.g. 采(彩).

¹¹ We are glad to say that we have been able to significantly improve the transcription and analysis of this text, as compared to its original publication in Galambos 2008a. We would also like to express our gratitude to the members of Professor Takata Tokio's Dunhuang seminar at the Institute for Research in Humanities (Kyōto University), where this text was initially introduced in January 2008. Also, special thanks to Professor Michael Friedrich of Hamburg University for his insights and help while reworking the translation of the text for this book.

涼州御山感通寺聖容天上下來

大祖文皇帝，膺千年之聖脈，百代之英運，屬龍非(飛)時當鳳舉，廓三籟於道銷，庇四民於德喪。維釋氏之頽綱，綴儒之絕約，澤流遐外，九被無窮。

皇帝時乘馭(御)寓(宇)握曆，君臨德□(漏?)淵泉，道光日月。不住无為而孝慈兆庶，不住有為而芴(芻)狗万機，洞九宅之非(飛)絙，樹三寶之弘祚。

於保定元年，涼州表上，方知尊容神異靡測，又空鐘震響，寔韻八音，燈輪自轉，□符三點。親嶮(驗)者，發奇悟於真源，傳聽者，蕩煩羈於延派。澡(藻)慕之流，京野翹注。公(恭)惟，大慈府(俯)降，宜就表受。罄捨珍財，敬營塔寺，依峰樹刹，竦(聳)丹采(彩)於重霄，因林構宇，曉朱青於[□□]，諒盡人工之妙。房廊周匝(匝)，勢放(倣)祇園，禪室連局，刑(形)模鷲嶺。左瞻崆峒，想軒(軒)轅之所遊。

乾德六年六月廿二日僧道昭記之耳

The holy countenance that came down from heaven¹² at the Gantong monastery on Mount Yu, Liangzhou

Emperor Taizu Wen had been bestowed a thousand years of holy succession, a hundred generations worth of precious fortune. He belonged to a time when the soaring dragon met the rising phoenix.¹³ He expanded the three windpipes [of Man, Earth and Heaven]¹⁴ when the Way had vanished, gave shelter to the four classes of people¹⁵ when the Virtue was lost. When Buddhists destroyed the principles, and impure Confucians broke the treaties, his benevolence flowed beyond limits, and covered the infinite nine times over.

At this time the Emperor was bequeathed the control of the realm¹⁶

- 12 In the Chinese text the character 下 (“down; below”) is written to the right of the character 上 (“up; above”) but it is unclear whether it was intended as a replacement or an insertion. In either case the grammar is somewhat awkward, even though the meaning remains clear.
- 13 This is a modification on the well-known phrase from the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書 (p. 966) “the dragon soars and the phoenix rises” 龍興鳳舉 which refers to the rise of a ruler.
- 14 The “three windpipes” 三籟 is a reference to Chapter 2 of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which talks about the music made by the symbolic pipes of Man, Earth and Heaven.
- 15 The term “four kinds of people” 四民 in classical literature used to denote the pre-dynastic categories of *shi* 士 (officers), *nong* 農 (farmers), *gong* 工 (artisans) and *shang* 商 (merchants) but in later use it referred to ordinary people in general.
- 16 The phrase *huangdi yuyu* 皇帝御寓, usually understood as “the Emperor ruling over his domain,” is relatively common in transmitted literature, with the character 寓 (“to lodge; place”) understood as standing for the word *yu* (“domain, realm”), generally

and the tenure of its reign,¹⁷ and while he ruled, his Virtue reached down to the deepest waters, his Way outshone the sun and the moon.¹⁸ He did not abide by non-action but made the masses pious and loving; he did not abide by action but handled the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs (i.e. with impartiality and dispassion).¹⁹ He permeated the suspended ropes²⁰ of the Nine Abodes, and erected the wide fortune of the Three Jewels.²¹

In the first year of Baoding (561), in Liangzhou a proposal was submitted, and this is when the people realized the infinite marvellous quality of this Buddha image. In addition, bells echoed in the sky, in their full

written with the character 宇. The phrase also occurs in the *Wenxin dialong* 文心雕龍, but in its *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 version the character 御 (“to drive, ride, rule”) appears as 馭 (“to drive”), just like in our manuscript.

- 17 The expression “seizing the reign” 握曆, translated here in context as receiving “the tenure of its reign” appears, among other places, in the *Weishu* 魏書 as part of the phrase “seizing the reign and receiving the charts” 握歷受圖.
- 18 The word *junlin* 君臨 here is a verb meaning “to rule.” This portion of the inscription is rather similar to a portion of text appearing, perhaps as a result of relying on the same source, in a composition by the celebrated poet Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846): “the emperor ruled the myriad lands in continuance for four years, his Way overshadowed the sun and the moon, and his Virtue moved the whole world” 皇帝君臨萬方, 迨及四載, 道光日月, 德動乾坤 (*Quan Tang wen* 全唐文: 6879–6880). Although one character on the manuscript cannot be read properly, we can see its left side and identify it as the water radical. A similar expression occurs in a writing by the sixth-century Yuan Shijun 元世俊 (d. ca. 540): “his benevolence penetrated the springs and wells, his Way outshone the sun and the moon” 澤漏原泉, 道光日月 (*Quan Hou Wei wen* 全後魏文: 173), and based on this we can safely insert 漏 (“to penetrate, drip, leak”) in place of the illegible character. Even if this is not the actual character that was written on the manuscript, the context validates that it was used in this or similar sense.
- 19 According to the commentators of the *Laozi* 老子, from where this concept is borrowed, “straw dogs” were puppets made of straw for the purpose of being burned at funerals as a form of sacrifice. Treating things as if they were straw dogs came to symbolize an attitude of sagely indifference or detachment, when actions are performed with a clear head without an emotional involvement.
- 20 The term “suspended rope,” (*feigeng* 飛絙; literally, “flying rope”) is used in traditional sources as a means of traversing a river, similar to a primitive suspension bridge. The term also commonly occurs in the form of *xuangeng* 懸絙 (“suspended rope”).
- 21 The parallel structure of “permeated the suspended ropes of the Nine Abodes, erected the wide fortune of the Three Jewels” 洞九宅之非(飛)絙, 樹三寶之弘祚 is similar to a phrase appearing in Falin’s 法琳 (572–640) *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (T.52.2110: 0509b), compiled in 626: “outside he permeated the Nine Currents, inside he exhausted the Three Baskets” 外洞九流內窮三藏. The context in Falin’s work is similar to Manuscript C: he describes the receipt of mandate and the good deeds of Emperor Yang 煬帝 of the Sui dynasty.

resonance sounding all eight sounds; and the lantern wheels spun around of their own accord, in the form matching the three-dot character.²² Those who witnessed this first hand attained a wonderful realization at the true source; whereas those who heard about it through others had their many restrictions washed away at distant tributaries.²³ People flocked around in curiosity and admiration, coming from both the capital and the country. What great compassion was bestowed down! The proposal was duly accepted.²⁴

Using up precious wealth, the stūpa and the monastery were reverently built. On the mountain top, a temple with red colours rising towards the skies was erected. In the forest buildings with vermillion and turquoise reaching the [.....] were constructed.²⁵ All this seems to have [been done in a way that] exhausted the brilliance of human craftsmanship. The cloister around the central hall was made circular, in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana; the meditation rooms were linked together in a chain, in a shape modelled upon the Vulture Peak. Looking up to the left was Mount Kongtong, reminding one that Xuan Yuan (i.e. the Yellow Emperor) once travelled through here.²⁶

22 The three-dot character 三點 is explained by Soothill and Hodous (1937: 200) as “the Sanskrit sign .·. as neither across nor upright, being of triangular shape, and indicating neither unity nor difference, before nor after.”

23 The character 延 in this place is problematic, since the actual graph cannot be positively identified. We are basing our reading on an attested variant of 延, which is similar but not identical to the one in the manuscript, and the context. The intended meaning of the sentence is clear: the word we transcribed as *yanpai* 延派 (“extending tributaries”) is contrasted with the word *zhenyuan* 真源 (“true fountainhead”), using the water spring metaphor to describe those who saw the miracle personally as having the experience at the source, whereas those who only heard of it, at the branches (*pai* 派). In terms of their logical structure, the parallel phrases 發奇悟於真源 and 蕩煩羈於逆派 are very similar to a line in a *fu* poem by Jiang You 江適 (ca. 301–365): “wash away the various pollutions on the outside of the body, make the wonderful ether flow on the inside” 蕩煩垢於體外, 流妙氣於中心 (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚: 1214).

24 It is unclear to us whether the great compassion refers to Buddha’s mercy or the emperor’s benevolence, which would obviously affect the interpretation of the sentence. The reverence word *gongwei* 恭惟 at the beginning could theoretically refer to either.

25 The parallel structure of the sentences makes it clear that two characters have been omitted here by Daozhao. The character 曉 is used in this context to write a verb meaning “to spread, to widen, to reach far,” therefore the image of the stūpa rising upwards parallels that of buildings spreading sideways.

26 The real Mount Kongtong, although also within modern-day Gansu Province (near the city of Pingliang 平涼), is in reality more than four hundred kilometers from

Recorded by the monk Daozhao on the 26th day of the sixth month of the sixth year of the Qiande era (968).

Through an examination of the original manuscript, we were able to improve the readings in Ma De's transcription in a number of cases, turning some previously meaningless clusters of characters into sentences. For example, the puzzling string 丘拘万機 turned out to be 芻狗万機 ("handling the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs"), a Daoist reference to governing the state. Turning to the content of the text, we can point out that the first part in many ways parallels the *Erjiao lun* 二教論 (Treatise on the two teachings) by Dao'an 道安 (fl. 560–580) of the Northern Zhou dynasty (556–581).²⁷ For example, the Nine Abodes 九宅 we see in Daozhao's manuscript, an otherwise uncommon term, occurs twice in the *Erjiao lun*. Although the exact meaning and scope of the term is unclear to us, Dao'an clearly contrasts it with the stages of the bodhisattva's path known as the Ten Grounds 十地 (Skt. *bhūmi*): "mounting the Ten Grounds you surpass brightness, traversing the Nine Abodes you tread higher" 階十地而逾明,邁九宅而高蹈.

More significantly, in Chapter 9 of the *Erjiao lun*, "Fu Fa fei Lao" 服法非老 (Following the Dharma and Negating Laozi), we find a discussion of the mandate and legitimacy of the emperor. In the excerpt below, we underline the places which match, either completely or partially, the Daozhao manuscript.

惟王者興作非詐力所致,必有靈命以應天人。至於符瑞不無階降,上則河圖洛書,次則龜龍麟鳳。此是帝皇之符籙也。今大周馭宇膺曆受圖.....

..... 芻狗萬機, 不可謂之為有, 孝慈兆庶, 不可謂之為無。

Now the true king rises not on account of deceit and violence; there must be a divine mandate corresponding to Heaven and Man. As for the auspicious portents, they cannot fail to come forth [from below] or descend [from above] either. First, there are the Chart of the Yellow River and the Book of the Luo River, then the turtle, dragon, unicorn and phoe-

the Gantong monastery as the crow flies, and considering the mountainous region in between it is improbable that one could see it from the site of the Gantong monastery. Therefore, the sight is most likely only referenced here, similar to the Garden of Jetavana and the Vulture Peak, as landscapes reminiscent of the monastery and its surroundings.

27 The *Erjiao lun* of Dao'an has been preserved in *juan* 8 of the *Guang Hongmingji* 廣弘明集 (T.52.2103: 0136–0143a).

nix. These are the propitious signs of the emperor. Now in our case, the Great [Northern] Zhou took control of the realm, was bestowed the tenure of the reign, and received the Chart [of the Yellow River]... He (i.e. the Northern Zhou emperor) handled the myriad affairs of government as if they were straw dogs, in this he cannot be said to have engaged in action; he made the multitudes of people pious and loving, in this he cannot be said to have engaged in non-action.²⁸

In view of these parallels, we can hypothesize that both texts were quoting, albeit only partially, from the same source. This original source was perhaps an imperial edict, as the miracle was obviously connected to the establishment of the Northern Zhou. Both texts eulogize the newly established reign and praise the accomplishments of the founder of the dynasty. Although the name Taizu (“Emperor Ancestor”) Wen appearing at the beginning of Manuscript C could theoretically denote more than one ruler in Chinese history, the *Erjiao lun* makes it clear that in this case the person in question is Yuwen Tai 宇文泰 (507–556), the progenitor of the Northern Zhou dynasty, and the father of its first ruler, Emperor Xiaomin 孝閔帝 (542–557).²⁹ In addition, the Gantongsi commemoration also mentions the Baoding era of the same dynasty, as the time when the building of the monastery was initiated. We know that Dao’an composed the *Erjiao lun* in 570 and that it was one of the works that documented the debates organized during the reign of Emperor Wu (560–578) between scholars of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism.³⁰ At the core of the debates was the emperor’s wish to legitimize his mandate, and both the Gantongsi manuscript and the relevant section of the *Erjiao lun* preserve some of this politico-religious agenda.

While the first part of the Gantongsi commemoration shows a connection with the *Erjiao lun*, the second part can be associated with a text from

28 This portion of the *Erjiao lun* has also been preserved in a Tang dynasty manuscript from Dunhuang (Pelliot chinois 3742). Because the character 治 appears in this copy twice with a missing stroke, we can be certain that the manuscript is not earlier than the ascension to the throne of emperor Gaozong 唐高宗 (649), whose given name was Zhi 治. Interestingly, this manuscript uses similar non-standard character forms for the same words as the inscription copied by Daozhao (e.g. 芎狗万機 on the inscription and manuscript vs. 芎狗萬機 in the *Guang Hongmingji*).

29 In the tomb stone of Yuwen Jian 宇文儉, Yuwen Tai’s eighth son, the Emperor is referred to using the exact same title as Manuscript C: Taizu Wen Huangdi 大祖文皇帝, with the first character written as *da* 大. See Shaanxi 2001: 36.

30 On the debates of Emperor Wu in general, and for a thoroughly annotated translation of the *Xiaodao lun* 笑道論 (Treatise on Ridiculing Daoism), another extant text documenting these debates, see Livia Kohn’s book *Laughing at the Tao* (Kohn 1995).

Turfan, i.e. an inscription on the verso (*yin* 陰) of a stone slab found by a peasant in 1911, commemorating the establishment of a monastery at Gaochang by Qu Bin (高昌綰曹朗中翹斌造寺銘). The colophon at the end of the text dates the erection of the stele to the 15th year of the Yanchang era 延昌 (575). A full transcription of this long inscription was published, among others, by Ikeda On; we are only quoting here the part that is relevant to our manuscript.³¹ We slightly modify Ikeda's transcription by inserting in parentheses preferred readings that are more appropriate to the context, mostly based on the Gantongsi commemoration in our Manuscript C. Again, we underline those parts of the text which are paralleled in Manuscript C.

乃於所領城西顯望之處，磬(磬)捨珍財，建茲靈刹。因其(峰)定□，□□[.....]構宇。銀槃切漢，□□□□□踊，金鐘振響，似香山之美樂。房廊周匝，勢方(倣)祇恒(蘭)，禪室連局，祕如兜率。 Therefore, at a place to the west of the territory under his jurisdiction, he used up precious wealth to build this marvellous temple. On the mountain top,³² he established a [temple, in the forest], and he constructed buildings. With the moon high above, ascending [.....].³³ The sound of golden bells echoed around, modelling the beautiful music of Xiangshan. The cloister around the central hall was made circular, in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana; the meditation rooms were linked together in a chain, as densely as in the Tūṣita heaven.

It is clear that the two fragments resemble each other both in terms of their genre and language. Even within this relatively short quote from the Gaochang inscription there are numerous overlapping phrases: “using up precious wealth” 磬捨珍財; “construct buildings” 構宇; “sound of bells echoing” 鐘振響; “the cloister around the central hall was made circular” 房廊周匝; “in a layout emulating the Garden of Jetavana” 勢方祇蘭; “the

31 Ikeda 1985: 112–113.

32 Ikeda's transcription has the character 其 in the phrase 因其定□, but Huang Wenbi's (1954) earlier rendering has 形. Based on our Manuscript C, we can be relatively certain that neither 其 nor 形 is appropriate here. Instead, the context calls for a noun describing the natural surrounding of the place where the temple was erected, along the lines of the phrases 依峰樹刹 (“on the mountain top, he erected a temple”) and 因林構宇 (“in the forest he constructed buildings”). Based on these parallels, we translate the phrase as if the character 峰 (“mountain top”) was used in this place. We also complete the object of the phrase (illegible in the inscription) based on Manuscript C.

33 The Chinese text has five characters missing here.

meditation rooms were linked together in a chain” 禪室連局. The connection between the two texts can be ascertained not only on the basis of these matching phrases but also because some of them (e.g. 禪室連局) are highly unique and to our knowledge do not occur anywhere else. This makes it even more unlikely that we are facing with coincidental textual matches.

Having identified the *Erjiao lun* and the Gaochang inscription as two texts affiliated with the Gantongsi inscription, the first thing that is apparent is that both of these otherwise unrelated sources date to the reign of Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou. Dao'an composed the *Erjiao lun* in 570, and the Gaochang stele was erected in 575. Accordingly, the two texts were written within five years from each other, which seems to be too short an interval to be merely a coincidence. While we are unaware of the link between these two texts beside reappearing in fragments in the Gantongsi inscription, it is clear that the Northern Zhou was a period of dynamic promotion of Buddhism not only in Central China but also in its Western peripheries. This is also evidenced by a series of new temple caves cut into the mountain side at the Mogao site near Dunhuang.³⁴ Similarly, the jātaka stories appearing on contemporary wall paintings show that this period was characterized by a new and rich artistic tradition.³⁵

The connection of Manuscript C with the Gaochang stele makes it likely that the Gantongsi commemoration was copied by Daozhao while he was travelling through the Hexi corridor in 968. Because the text includes the name of Mount Yu and the Gantong monastery, we can be certain that the stele at one point stood in Liangzhou, even though it did not survive to modern times.

6.3 The Gantong monastery

As we have seen, the Gantong monastery in Liangzhou, formerly known as Ruixiangsi, is closely tied to the tradition of the monk Liu Sahe and his prophecy about the auspicious image of the Buddha appearing at Mount Yu. This tradition is also related to the establishment of some of the Dunhuang caves, a number of which contain murals retelling the main events of the narrative. The history of the monastery established at this particular site near Liangzhou is recorded in several sources, the earliest being the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 (T.52.2106: 0417c) by

³⁴ Duan Wenjie (1994: 71).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667). This account follows the main points of the Liu Sahe tradition, as well as the evolution of the monastery:

元魏涼州山開出像者。太武大延元年，有離石沙門劉薩訶者，備在僧傳，歷遊江表禮鄞縣塔。至金陵開育王舍利，能事將訖西行。至涼州西一百七十里，番禾郡界東北，望御谷山遙禮。人莫測其然也，訶曰：“此山崖當有像出，靈相具者則世樂時平，如其有缺則世亂人苦。”經八十七載，至正光元年，因大風雨雷震山巖，挺出石像高一丈八尺，形相端嚴唯無有首。登即選石命工，安訖還落。魏道陵遲其言驗矣。

至周元年，涼州城東七里，潤石忽出光照燭幽顯。觀者異之，乃像首也。奉安像身宛然符合。神儀彫缺四十餘年，身首異處二百餘里，相好昔虧一時還備。時有燈光流照鍾聲飛響。皆莫委其來也。周保定元年。立為瑞像寺。建德將廢首又自落，武帝令齊王往驗，乃安首像項，以兵守之，及明還落如故。遂有廢法國滅之徵接焉，備于周釋道安碑，周雖毀教不及此像。開皇通法依前置寺。大業五年煬帝西征，躬往禮觀，改為感通道場。今仍存焉，依圖擬者非一，及成長短終不得定。

During the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534) a mountain opened up at Liangzhou and brought forth a statue. During the reign of Emperor Taiwu (424–452), in the 1st year of the Taiyan era (435), a monk by the name of Liu Sahe, a native of Lishi, whose biography is recorded in the *Lives of Eminent monks*, travelled along the Yangzi river, paying homage at the stūpa at Maoxian [in Zhejiang province]. Arriving in Jinling (present-day Nanjing), he opened the reliquary of King Aśoka, and afterwards travelled west. When he arrived a hundred and seventy *li* to the west of Liangzhou, at the northeast border of Fanhe commandery, he looked up at Mount Yugu in the distance and bowed to it. Since the people did not understand the reason for his action, he said, “This mountainside will issue forth an image. Should the divine depiction be complete, there will be happiness and peace in the world; but if it should be deficient, the world will sink into chaos and the people will suffer.”

After 87 years, in the first year of the Zhengguang era (519), the mountainside thrust out a stone statue following a great thunderstorm. It was eighteen feet high and of marvellous appearance, but with no head. When the people climbed up there, they picked a stone [as raw material] and ordered craftsmen [to carve a head], but it always fell off as soon as they put it on. At that time, the [Northern] Wei dynasty was about to end and so the monk's words were to become true.

In the first year of the [Northern] Zhou (557), seven *li* to the east of the city wall of Liangzhou, in a gorge a rock suddenly began to shine brightly

in the darkness. All who saw it were amazed. This turned out to be the head of the statue. People reverently installed it on the body of the statue and it fit perfectly. Even though the statue was incomplete for over forty years, with the head and body apart for more than two hundred *li*, the two came together and once again became complete. At that moment lights shone from everywhere and the sound of bells echoed around, and no one understood where all this was coming from.

In the first year of the Baoding era (561) of the [Northern] Zhou, the Ruixiang (Auspicious Image) monastery was established here. In the Jiande era (572–78) the head was severed again and fell on the ground of its own accord. Emperor Wu ordered Prince Qi to travel there and investigate the matter. He set the head back on and stationed soldiers to guard the statue but by the next morning [the head] had fallen off again, just as before. After this came a period when the Buddhist teachings were abolished and the country was destroyed. All this is recorded on the stele of the Zhou dynasty monk Dao'an. Despite the religious persecutions of the Zhou, this statue was not destroyed. During the Kaihuang era (581–89) the Buddhist teachings were promoted and the monastery was [re]built as before. In the 5th year of the Daye era (609) when Emperor Yang [of the Sui dynasty] led a campaign to the west, he came here personally on a pilgrimage, and changed its name to Gantong sanctuary. The statue is still there today; many have tried to copy it but none have been able to get the proportions right.³⁶

The account ends here, since the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* was completed in the 660s.³⁷ Its author Daoxuan claims that he based the above description on “the stele of the Zhou dynasty monk Dao'an” which had survived the persecutions of the 570s. It is no coincidence that the same Daoxuan was also the person who compiled the *Guang Hongmingji* where Dao'an's *Erjiao lun* is recorded. In the light of the matching bits of text in Manuscript C with the *Erjiao lun*, it is possible that the stele inscription copied in Manuscript C was to some extent also based on the stele of Dao'an.

36 Our translation relies on, and partially follows earlier ones by Roderick Whitfield (1989: 68–69) and Wu Hung (1996: 35–36).

37 This account from the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* 集神州三寶感通錄 was later taken almost verbatim by Daoshi 道世 and his collaborators in the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (T.53.2122: 0387a), which was completed in 668. Daoshi himself used to work together with Daoxuan at the Ximing monastery 西明寺 (Shinohara 2003: 69).

In one of his other works, the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (T.50.2060: 0644c), Daoxuan recorded a slightly different version of the history of the monastery. Here we only quote from the time period between 561 and 609:

Xu Gaoseng zhuan

保定元年，置為瑞像寺焉，乃有燈光流照鍾聲飛嚮，相續不斷，莫測其由。建德初年，像首頻落，大冢宰及齊王，躬往看之，乃令安處，夜落如故。乃經數十，更以餘物為頭，終墜於地。後周滅佛法，僅得四年隣國殄喪，識者察之方知先鑒，雖遭廢除像猶特立。開皇之始經像大弘，莊飾尊儀更崇寺宇。大業五年，煬帝躬往禮敬厚施，重增榮麗，因改舊額為感通寺焉。

In the first year of the Baoding era (561) of the [Northern] Zhou, the Rui-xiang monastery was established here. At that moment lights shone from everywhere and the sound of bells echoed around incessantly. No one understood where it all came from. In the Jiande era (572–78) the head of the statue fell off again and again, consequently the Regent, together with Prince Qi, went there personally to observe this. They ordered the head set back on but during the night it fell off as before. This happened dozens of times, and when they used another head, in the end it too fell on the ground. Later on the Zhou persecuted Buddhism and within only four years destruction befell the neighbouring states. Those who knew [about the miracle] examined it and this is when they realized what it prophesized. The statue alone remained erect all through this devastation. At the beginning of the Kaihuang era (581–89) the statue came to be greatly revered, the holy demeanour was adorned and the monastery once again worshipped.

In the 5th year of the Daye era (609) Emperor Yang [of the Sui dynasty] personally came here to worship and to give a generous donation. Since its splendour and beauty was once again expanded, the monastery's old name was changed to Gantongsi.

At the end of the story Daoxuan adds, once again, that this description is based on the stele of Dao'an. In general, the two accounts basically agree, the only notable difference being in the moment when the lights shone and sounds echoed on the mountain. In the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* this happens in 557 following the appearance of the head of the statue, whereas in the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* it happened in 561 when the monastery was established. The latter version is the one which conforms to the sequence recorded in Manuscript C, where the sounds of bells and music are also part

of the incredible phenomena accompanying the establishment of the monastery in 561. Another similarity of the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* account with Manuscript C is the sentence “Those who knew [about the miracle] examined it and this is when they realized what it prophesized” 識者察之方知先鑒, which occurs in our manuscript as “this is when the people realized the infinite marvellous quality of Buddha’s image” 方知尊容神異靡測. In both cases this realization is recorded as having happened in 561.

According to the above versions of Daoxuan’s account, the last time the monastery’s name was changed in the fifth year of Daye (609) when it was renovated, enlarged and renamed as Gantongsi. We know that a century and half later, the monastery’s name was changed to Shengrongsi 聖容寺 (Monastery of Holy Countenance). The evidence for this is found on three bits of inscription on the wall of a pagoda located behind the actual site of the monastery, which say “Shengrongsi” 聖容寺, “the second year of Qianyuan” 乾元二年 (759), and “1,500 foreign monks” 番僧一千五百人, respectively.³⁸ Sun and Dang (1983: 105) also saw the name change confirmed by a mid-Tang painting on the ceiling of the western niche in Cave 231 at Dunhuang. The inscription on the painting reads, “The auspicious image of the holy countenance in the north of Fanhe county at Mount Yangrong” 都督府仰容山番和縣北聖容瑞像.³⁹ However, the phrase *shengrong* (“holy countenance”) in this place is clearly not the name of the monastery but a general term for the visage of the Buddha. The title of Manuscript C uses this term in exactly the same way (“the holy countenance that came down from heavens at the Gantong monastery on Mount Yugu, Liangzhou”), at the same time referring to the monastery by the name of Gantongsi.

38 Zhu (2005: 64). Note that while the term *fanseng* 番僧 could be interpreted as “Tibetan monks,” traditional Tibetan histories and modern scholarship agree that there is little evidence of the ordination of any Tibetan monks before the 730s, and the establishment of Buddhism as the Tibetan state religion did not occur until towards the end of the eighth century. Therefore the existence of such a large number of Tibetan monks in this area and at this time is unlikely.

39 Mount Yangrong (Yangrongshan) here is possibly a mistake for Mount Yurong, although it is possible that this was simply one of the many variants of the mountain’s name (Yugushan 御谷山, Yushan 御山, Yurongshan 御容山, etc). It is also suggestive that Yangrongshan 仰容山 literally means “mountain of looking up at the visage” which is an obvious reference to Buddha’s image and the miracle. Another obvious connection between two variant names of the mountain is that Yugushan 御谷山 and Yurongshan 御容山 are graphically identical, save for the ‘roof’ radical atop of the second character 谷 (*yu*, ‘valley’), turning it into a 容 (*rong* ‘visage, appearance’), which thus becomes semantically linked with the miracle.

If the monastery was already called Shengrongsi in 759 then the only reason why Daozhao referred to it in 968 as Gantongsi was that he was copying a text that had been written earlier, before the name change took place. Accordingly, by the time of his visit, the inscription on the stele was at least two centuries old. This also means that the text could not have been a commemoration of a reconstruction project carried out around the Five Dynasties or early Song, as Ma De (1994: 111) suggested, since the stele was erected much earlier.

A stele inscription called “Record of the Cause and Condition of the Auspicious Image of the Stone Buddha at Yushan, Liangzhou” 涼州御山石佛瑞像因緣記 was found in 1979 underneath the corner of the city wall in Wuwei. This inscription dates to 742 and thus might be the earliest surviving version of the history of the stone statue of Buddha at Yushan, including the construction of the monastery.⁴⁰ From the inscription we learn that in 561 it was Yuwen Jian 宇文儉 (551–581), one of the emperor’s sons, who was sent by his father to the site to verify the miracle:

周保定元年，敕使宇文儉檢覆靈驗不虛，便敕涼、甘、肅三州力役三千人造寺，至三年功畢。

In the first year of the Baoding era (561) of the [Northern] Zhou, by imperial order Yuwen Jian was sent to investigate that the spiritual efficacy (*lingyan*) was not false; and then by imperial order 3,000 workers from the three prefectures of Liangzhou, Ganzhou and Suzhou were ordered to build a monastery. It took three years until works were completed.⁴¹

Since at this time Yuwen Jian was only ten years (eleven *sui*) old, it is unlikely that he could have performed a serious investigation on his own and was probably only nominally in charge of the mission. Yet the fact that an imperial prince was heading the project shows its importance for the ruling house. The same is true of the magnitude of the works, which must have

40 It predates Manuscript C by over two centuries. All other extant texts related to the history of the miracle survived in much later editions.

The prince Qi mentioned in these two accounts was Yuwen Xian 宇文靈 (544–581), one of Yuwen Jian’s elder brothers. Thus the sources disagree regarding the identity of the prince put in charge.

41 Sun and Dang (1983: 102). According to the authors, this stele was initially placed at the Gantong monastery, rather than at Mount Yu (*ibid.*: 107).

been conducted on a colossal scale since they took three years and 3,000 workers to complete.⁴²

As to the date of the original stele inscription, while the period when the monastery's name was Gantongsi lasted from 609 to not later than 759, we can narrow it down further using the following argument. We saw that the text could be connected with two texts from the late sixth century: (i) the Gaochang stele from 575; and (ii) the *Erjiao lun* of Dao'an from 570. It would then be reasonable to assume that the stele inscription was written shortly after these two texts became available. If we compare the description of the main events in the history of the monastery in Daoxuan's account – as recorded in the *Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu* and the *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* – with Manuscript C, we can see that they coincide up to a certain point in time (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. The main events of the monastery's history in Daoxuan's account and Manuscript C.

Daoxuan's account	Manuscript C
1 st year of the [Northern] Zhou (557): miracle	Emperor Taizu Wen received the mandate (557)
1 st year of Baoding (561): Ruixiang monastery established	1 st year of Baoding (561): submitting a proposal in Liangzhou; building the monastery
Jiande era (572–78): statue's head falls off because of turmoil in the world	
Kaihuang era (581–589): monastery rebuilt	
5 th year of Daye (609): name changed to Gantongsi	(Monastery referred to as Gantongsi in the title)

In both sources the story begins with the advent of the Northern Zhou dynasty, the year when the miracle predicted by Liu Sahe occurred. Then the monastery is established in commemoration of the miracle; parallel with this, in Manuscript C we read about the submission of a proposal in Liangzhou (涼州表上), presumably for the construction of the monastery. The sequence of events in Manuscript C stops here, while Daoxuan goes further in time, naming two more stages in the monastery's history: a renovation or rebuilding during the Kaihuang era (581–589) and the name change in

⁴² In fact, this statement about the time and number of people involved in the construction seems to be exaggerated in view of the monastery's site today.

609. But in its title Manuscript C refers to the monastery as the Gantongsi, which means that the original inscription was written not earlier than the name change (609). Although the text in its current form appears to be incomplete, Manuscript C only describes the initial construction of the monastery in 561. It does not name any of the further steps in its history which are known to us from Daoxuan's account, and the only indication of a later date is the name Gantongsi appearing in the title.⁴³

In view of this, we believe that the original inscription dates to 609 or shortly after this time. While the monastery was known by the name of Gantongsi for almost another century and half, the textual connections of the manuscript all point to the late sixth century, more specifically to Dao'an.⁴⁴

6.4 The pilgrimage movement of the 960s

Daozhao visited the Gantong monastery on his way from Wutaishan to India in search of Buddhist relics. The date of the copy he made of the stele inscription there, 968, suggests that his visit might have been part of a documented group of pilgrims travelling under imperial sponsorship. As we saw in Chapter 3, a group of 157 Buddhist pilgrims under the leadership of Xingqin was dispatched in 966, only two years prior to the date of Manuscript C. We do not know how fast these monks travelled but it is certain that they stayed for some time in the Buddhist cities along the way, as evidenced by many surviving travel accounts. It is also unlikely that the 157 monks travelled as a single group; instead, some of them might have chosen alternative, less direct routes.⁴⁵

43 As for the title of Manuscript C, while it is possible that it was not part of the original inscription but was added by Daozhao when he made a copy, this seems less likely if we consider that in his time the monastery was already called Shengrongsi. Having said this, we should also point out that the title in Manuscript C is in fact very much unlike a real title; it is simply a sentence that does not very well fit the context. The only reason for claiming it to be the title is its physical location on the manuscript.

44 The exception from this is the Gaochang stele, although it is not impossible that further research would reveal a previously unknown connection between Dao'an and this inscription.

45 This large group of pilgrims receiving imperial mandate for their journey did not come from one monastery, otherwise its name would have been mentioned in historical sources. Instead, they undoubtedly represented a large number of monasteries from different regions of the empire. It is all the more likely then that after the imperial audience they set off for India based on different schedules and itineraries. If the audience took place in Kaifeng, at least some of them might have taken the long detour to Wutaishan before beginning their journey westwards.

Another important figure among the travelling monks active in the early years of Emperor Taizu is Daoyuan. Besides being mentioned in historical sources (see Chapter 3), his name also appears in at least two Dunhuang manuscripts.⁴⁶ In Or.8210/S.6264 his signature appears at the end of a document given to Cao Qingjing 曹清淨 in Khotan, following a ceremony. The document dates to the twelfth year of the Tianxing 天興 era (961) and he is identified in it as the master of precepts.⁴⁷ In addition, Daoyuan's name also appears in the colophon of Pelliot chinois 2893: "Record of copying done on behalf of the monks Xingkong and Daoyuan by a hired hand" 僧性空与道圓顧人寫記.⁴⁸ The main text on the manuscript, to which the colophon is appended, is a portion of the same *Baoenjing* (*juan* 4) that appears on our Manuscript B recto (*juan* 3).⁴⁹ Although the layout and calligraphic style of these two manuscripts are similar, they are clearly written in different hand. Even so, the visual resemblance between the two manuscripts suggests a connection, which is further supported by the fact that the verso of both items contains writings in non-Chinese scripts: Manuscript B verso has Tibetan tantric texts, whereas Pelliot chinois 2893 verso contains medical texts in Khotanese.⁵⁰

46 We are grateful to Professor Takata Tokio for pointing out these two manuscripts to us.

47 This manuscript is described in Dohi (1980: 262–263). The actual date of the third year of the Tianxing reign in Khotan has been debated, but recent research seems to indicate that it corresponds to 961. See Skjærvø 2002: lxviii; also Rong 2007: 18. In his review of Skjærvø 2002, Professor Yoshida (2004: 32) makes a correction, saying that the 14th year of Tianxing is actually 963, not 964 as it appears in the book.

48 The word *ji* 記 ("record") at the end of similar colophons usually refers to writing the colophon itself, whereas the word *xie* 寫 ("copying") to making a copy of the main text. Thus although the characters 寫記 might appear to be standing for a compound word, in reality they denote separate words and should be translated as "record of copying." (We are grateful for Professor Michael Friedrich and Wang Ding for drawing our attention to this.)

49 It is worth asking why Xingkong and Daoyuan would hire someone else to copy the sūtra on their behalf. Not only that, the phrase *guren* 顧人 ("hire a man") indicates that they actually paid for the service and that this was done by a layman. The use of a lay scribe is not surprising, since a number of colophons attest to the use of professional copy hands used in Dunhuang at the time. As to why members of the clergy did not carry out this merit-accumulating task themselves, Zhang and Rong (1984: 37) speculated that perhaps the two travelling monks did not have time to do it themselves. This would be a reasonable assumption if we consider that they were only passing through a place and that copying a whole chapter out would have taken a few days at least. In any case, the ink of the colophon is visibly lighter and in a different hand to the text of the sūtra, confirming that they were penned by different people.

50 There is yet another copy of the *Baoenjing* that is similar in style and layout to these two. This is manuscript Or.8210/S.5115 at the British Library, containing part of Chapter 7 of the sūtra. However, the verso is blank and there is no colophon.

Daoyuan came back from his trip to the West in 965, which was three years earlier than the date of Manuscript C. Since the Tibetan letters in Manuscript A make it clear that Daozhao was travelling in the direction of India, rather than coming back from there, he could not have participated in Daoyuan's mission. He could have, however, been part of the 157 monks who travelled under the leadership of Xingqin and were granted permission for a journey in 966.

In addition, the *Wenxian tongkao* also records that in 966, the same year that Xingqin received permission for his pilgrimage, another group was also travelling through Liangzhou and Ganzhou:⁵¹

乾德四年,知西涼州折逋葛皮上言,有回鶻二百餘人、漢僧六十餘人,自朔方路來,為部落劫掠。僧云欲往天竺取經,並送達甘州訖。

In the fourth year of the Qiande era (966), Zhebu Gepi, the administrator of Western Liangzhou reported to his superior that over 200 Uighurs and 60 some Chinese monks came from the Shuofang road. They were robbed by tribesmen. The monks said that they wanted to go to India in search of scriptures. Accordingly, they were escorted until Ganzhou.⁵²

This group of around 60 Chinese monks is very close in time and place to Daozhao who travelled through Liangzhou two years later in 968.⁵³ This was a period when large numbers of Buddhist pilgrims were being sent to India, and many of these went along a similar route as Daozhao.⁵⁴ Even though the Tibetan letters in Manuscript A contain no references to anyone else travelling with him, it is possible that he either already was travelling separately or was joining a group later on, perhaps in Dunhuang.⁵⁵

51 Once again, the same account with minor differences appears in the *Songshi*: 14153.

52 *Wenxian tongkao*, *juan* 335. The same account also appears in the *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿, "Fangyu" 方域 21.14., with minor variations. For example, the name of the Zhebu Gepi appears as Zhebu Gezhi 折逋葛支, which is obviously due to the graphic similarity of the characters *pi* 皮 and *zhi* 支. This latter version of the same account is also included in the *Songshi*: 14153.

53 As we have already mentioned earlier, Fan Chengda's travel account (T.51.2089: 0981c) recorded another large group of 300 monks sent to India by imperial order in 964.

54 For a fairly exhaustive list of Buddhist pilgrimages in transmitted sources see Jan (1966, I-II), conveniently arranged in a chronological order. This very useful list, however, does not include manuscript material.

55 It is also conceivable that the letters of introduction would mention only the name of the leader and that a number of monks would be travelling with the same set of documents.

The prime importance of Manuscript C lies in its connection with traditional accounts of Buddhist pilgrimage to India. According to transmitted sources, the second half of the tenth century was a period of lively religious interaction between China and India, and most of the traffic passed through the Hexi corridor. Although we do not know which group mentioned in historical sources Daozhao was travelling with, or whether he was travelling with a group at all, he was part of the larger pilgrimage movement of this period, and as such his voyage was no doubt very similar to those taken by others. An indication of this is that he carried with him a copy of the *Baoenjing* (Manuscript B), and that a similar copy of the same sūtra was found in Dunhuang with a colophon by Daoyuan, whose voyage to India and Khotan was recorded in traditional sources. Therefore the three manuscripts Daozhao pasted together and carried with him are a firsthand witness of how Chinese monks travelled in search of the dharma and Buddhist scriptures (*qiufa qujing* 求法取經). In the following chapter we turn to the *Baoenjing* and its links with the Silk Road and the Chinese pilgrims who travelled along it.

7 The *Baoenjing*

Of all the texts found in the Daozhao manuscript, the *Baoenjing* is the only one that has also survived as a transmitted work.¹ Of course, we cannot rule out the possibility that the inscription on Manuscript C or some of the Tibetan tantric texts on Manuscript B verso were more widely known at one time, but they did not survive. The *Baoenjing*, on the other hand, has been continuously transmitted as part of the Buddhist canonical tradition and has been included in most editions of the Chinese canon. In the Taishō Tripi-taka it is listed under number 156. This chapter introduces the *Baoenjing* and some of the issues regarding its apocryphal nature. We take a closer look at related manuscripts from Dunhuang, investigating whether these had any concrete use in the daily lives of monastic communities. Our main objective here is to determine whether the sūtra was added to the pilgrim's manuscript by chance or had some significance with regard to the pilgrimage.

The full title of the sūtra is *Dafangbian Fo baoenjing* 大方便佛報恩經, that is the “Sūtra of the great good means (*mahopāya*) used by the Buddha to repay kindness,” which is a reference to the care he received from his parents during a succession of past lives. The title has been rendered into English in a number of ways, including *Sūtra of requiting blessings received*, *Sūtra of repaying debts of gratitude*, or *Sūtra of repaying kindness*. We use the transliteration of the short form of the Chinese title as *Baoenjing*. The title of the sūtra first appears in Sengyou's 僧祐 (445–518) famous catalogue *Chu Sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (T.55.2145: 0021c), completed around 515, as a sūtra in seven *juan*, with the name of the translator unknown.²

1 A short summary of the findings in this chapter was presented at the conference “Dunhuang manuscripts and corresponding Buddhist scriptures: Their recensions, adaptations and changes” (Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, March 27–28, 2009). We are thankful for the input by the participants of the conference, especially Wendi Adamek (Columbia University) and Sem Vermeersch (Seoul National University). An early version of the chapter also appeared in print as Galambos 2008b.

2 This does not mean, of course, that the sūtra referred to by this title was the same as the *Baoenjing* we know from later editions. In fact, Lin Hsien-ting (1987) argues that there

The *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀 (T.49.2034: 0112b) from 597 names no translator either but the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (T.55.2154: 0710b) in 730 appends a note stating that the sūtra was translated by an otherwise unknown figure from the Later Han period (AD 25–220). However, the fact that no original version in an Indic language was ever identified, and that a number of direct borrowings from other Buddhist works can be ascertained in the text, has led modern scholars to the conclusion that it is an apocryphal sūtra composed in China.

7.1 Physical description of Manuscript B recto

The copy of the *Baoenjing* in the Daozhao manuscript consists of seven panels, the first and last of which are shorter than the rest. The general dimensions of the standard panels are about 25–6 cm x 50 cm, with the length of lines based on a predrawn grid of 20.5 cm height. The left and right sides of the panels have been trimmed and thus part of the first and last lines of text on each panel is missing. The panels were joined together and the sūtra was rolled up in a scroll format but, as a result of modern conservation, the individual panels are now stored separately as flat sheets of paper, as discussed above in Chapter 5. Only the first two panels are still joined together, perhaps because the conservators considered Panel 1 too short to be stored as a separate sheet. Based on the length of the transmitted version of the sūtra, we can calculate that an additional 11–12 panels are missing from the beginning of the scroll. This is if we assume, of course, that the scroll had initially contained the entire *juan* 3, and not only part of it.

There are 16–18 characters per line and 28 lines per panel. The grid lines are clearly visible. The characters were written with a calamus, without any attempt to imitate brush strokes, as it is often seen in sūtras of this period. The calligraphy is inept at the beginning, but it seems that a more skilled writer has taken over from about the beginning of Panel 3. A couple of mistakenly reversed characters have been corrected subsequently with the customary swoosh mark. On Panel 2, where the end of a section left the rest of the line open, a clumsy hand has scribbled what at first sight seems like the characters 元旦里 (Figure 10). However, a look at the previous line reveals that they are in fact a poor imitation of the characters 无量 written as part

is some evidence that there might have been two versions which were subsequently merged into the one that later became part of the Buddhist canon.

of the main text immediately to their right, with the character 量 appearing as if divided into two parts. It is quite clear that this scribble must have been made by someone unfamiliar with Chinese writing, or at least possessing only a rudimentary proficiency in it. In addition, the characters written here are obviously meaningless. Considering that much of the actual travel route we have material evidence for proceeds through Tibetan monasteries, it is reasonable to assume that these two characters were written by a non-Chinese local monk.

There are also numerous scribbles in Tibetan between the lines of the Chinese. All of these appear in the empty spaces left by the Chinese scribe, clearly indicating that they have been added to the manuscript after the Chinese *sūtra* was copied. A slightly longer Tibetan ritual text has been attached to the end of the manuscript, once again carefully avoiding overwriting any of the Chinese *sūtra*'s text (Figure 11).

As we have already noted, the text on the manuscript is *juan* 3 of the *Baoenjing*, which comprises Chapter 5, "Discussions" 論議品. The first part of the chapter is missing, and the manuscript now only has about the last third of the entire text, and begins towards the middle of the story about Queen Māyā's incarnation as a doe. The end of the manuscript is complete and is appropriately marked with the ending title *Baoenjing juan di san* 報恩經卷第三 ("Sūtra of repaying kindness, *juan* 3"). The text of the manuscript is almost identical to the transmitted version of the *sūtra*, with only minor discrepancies, none of which is significant enough to justify considering this a different version.

7.2 Contents of the *Baoenjing*

In terms of its structure, the *Baoenjing* consists of 9 chapters (*pin* 品) arranged in 7 *juan*. Each *juan* consists of a single chapter, except for the first two, which comprise two chapters.

Juan I.

Chapter 1. Foreword 序品第一

Chapter 2. Caring for one's parents 孝養品第二

Juan II.

Chapter 3. Counteraction 對治品第三

Chapter 4. The arising of bodhicitta 發菩提心品第四

Juan III.

Chapter 5. Discussions 論議品第五

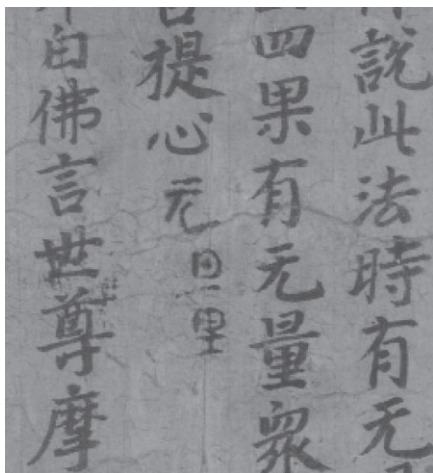


Fig.10 The clumsy scribble at the end of a line in Panel 2, which is simply a copy of the characters 无量 appearing to the right.

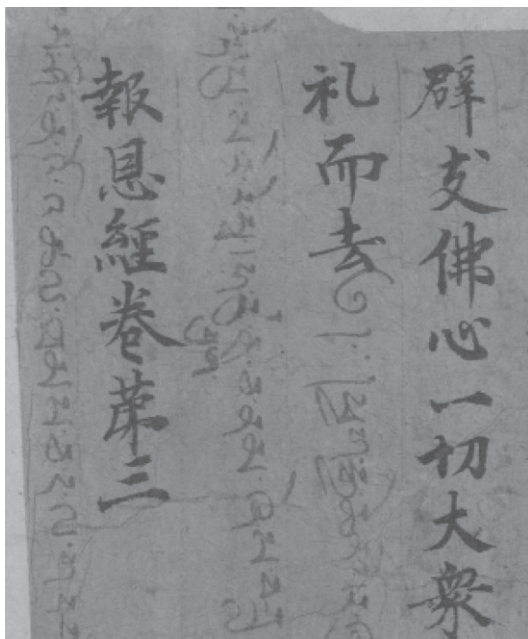


Fig.11 Part of the Tibetan ritual text at the end of Manuscript B recto, written in the spaces left between the lines of Chinese characters.

Juan IV.

Chapter 6. Prince Eyou 惡友品第六

Juan V.

Chapter 7. Compassion 慈品第七

Juan VI.

Chapter 8. Upāli 優波離品第八

Juan VII.

Chapter 9. Kin and close friends 親近品第九

Chapter 1 describes the general setting for the sūtra, with the Buddha teaching a multitude of disciples and deities at the Vulture Peak. Ānanda, one of the foremost disciples, addresses the Venerable One with a question regarding the love and care of one's parents. At this point the Buddha issues a five-coloured ray of light illuminating the cardinal directions of the world and begins to teach.

In Chapter 2 the Buddha begins his reply to Ānanda's question and explains that in his past lives he has already been reborn as a child to many parents, and also as a parent to many children. In the course of these lives, he has already shown kindness and care towards other sentient beings and it was also because of caring for his parents and requiting their kindness that he could finally attain enlightenment. He retells the first story about his incarnation as Prince Sujāti who fed his parents with his own flesh while they were fleeing their country. It was in this life that he vowed to attain Buddhahood in a future lifetime and use the food of the dharma to eliminate the hunger and thirst of all sentient beings.

In Chapter 3 the Buddha tells the story of when he was the sage king Cakravartī who was asked to make a personal sacrifice by a great teacher in exchange for learning about the dharma. The king had to carve a thousand holes in his body, pour oil into them and light them up as candles. Having done this, he obtained the teaching and his body was also miraculously restored.

Chapter 4 is the shortest in the sūtra, and would have only made up about 90 lines in the usual manuscript format. The Buddha, in reply to a question of how a bodhisattva requites kindness, explains that this can be done by teaching others to seek enlightenment. He then retells the story of how he, as a result of his own bad deeds, once fell into the Eight Great Hells. When he was in the Fire-Chariot Hell, he was pulling the fire chariot with another sufferer on whom he took great pity. He vowed to attain enlightenment one day to free all beings from suffering. He implored the ox-headed licitor to take mercy on his companion, but the licitor was enraged by the request

and stabbed him to death, thus in effect freeing him from his incarnation in hell.

Chapter 5 retells two jātakas. The first tells of a previous lifetime in which the Buddha was a prince of the kingdom of Vārāṇasī, who sacrificed himself for preparing medicine for his ill father by plucking out his own eyes and breaking his own bones. The second story is about a former life of his mother, Queen Māyā, who had once been born in human form from a doe and was given as bride to the king of Vārāṇasī. She gave birth to a lotus flower with five hundred petals with a baby boy under each of these. She asked the king to give the boys to each of his five hundred wives in the palace, who otherwise would have grown jealous of her, to raise and nurture them. When the boys grew up, they all stepped on the path of the Buddha.

In Chapter 6 the Buddha retells the story of two princes, Eyou 惡友 ('Bad Friend,' a former incarnation of Devadatta) and Shanyou 善友 ('Good Friend,' an incarnation of the Buddha), sons of the king of Vārāṇasī born from his two favourite wives. Shanyou wants to help his people and sets out to obtain the magic *maṇi* pearl. On the way home his evil brother blinds him and returns home alone, telling their parents that his brother perished. The good prince eventually regains his eyesight and returns home, and even pleads on behalf of his evil brother. He then uses the magic pearl to bring prosperity and contentment to his people.

Chapter 7 begins with the Buddha telling his disciples that he will soon attain *nirvāṇa*; Śāriputra, unable to witness his death, dies first by having himself consumed by a fire ignited from within his body. The disciples now mourn Śāriputra, and the Buddha comforts them with the story illustrating that a similar chain of events had already happened in the past. He tells the story of how he himself was a king who had his head cut off by a Brahmin, and how Śāriputra was at the time the king's loyal minister who committed suicide after the death of his beloved king. The chapter continues with the nun Huase 華色 telling the story of the cruel sufferings and calamities she experienced before she finally came to follow the Buddha's dharma.

In Chapter 8 the disciple Upāli asks clarification regarding the meaning of the terms *sangui* (*triśaraṇa*) and *wujie* (*pañca-veramaṇī*), to which the Buddha provides a detailed explanation. This is the only chapter that has no stories of former lives, being entirely devoted to theoretical issues.

Chapter 9 begins with the jātaka in which the Buddha was a young Brahmin who killed a bandit scout, and thus voluntarily accepted the punishment of going to hell in order to save the lives of a group of 500 travellers. This is followed by the story about the Buddha having been born as a lion that lived in the mountains and was fond of *śramaṇas* chanting sūtras. A hunter

intrigued by the lion's golden fur disguised himself as a monk and shot the lion dead with a poisonous arrow.

7.3 Problems of composition and authenticity

Modern researchers have raised doubts regarding the authenticity of the *Baoenjing* as a sūtra translated into Chinese, since no original was ever found in any of the usual source languages. Its attribution to an anonymous Later Han translator, a comment that surfaces in catalogues from the sixth century onwards is also problematic because the linguistic features of the text point to a significantly later period. Then there is the disjointed structure of the text, where on a number of occasions the stories seem to have been simply sequenced one after the other with no inherent connection. The theoretical exposition in Chapter 8 gives the impression of being out of place among the jātakas. But the most obvious proof to the eclectic composition are the numerous parallels with other Chinese Buddhist texts, most of which can be reliably identified as borrowings in the direction of the *Baoenjing*.

In 1955 the Japanese scholar Naitō Tatsuo wrote a short but important article about the composition of the *Baoenjing*.³ He pointed that most of the approximately 20 stories in the *Baoenjing* can be found in other Buddhist texts, with the exception of about five. Of the ones with parallel counterparts nine can be linked with the *Xianyujing* 賢愚經 (T.04.0202); four with the *Za baozangjing* 雜寶藏經 (T.04.0203); three with the *Pusa benxing jing* 菩薩本行經 (T.03.0155); another three with the *Liudu jijing* 六度集經 (T.03.0152;); and one with each of the *Pusa bensheng manlun* 菩薩本生鬘論 (T.03.0160), the *Fo benxing jijing* 佛本行集經 (T.03.0190), the *Pusa benyuan jing* 菩薩本緣經 (T.03.0153), and the *Faju piyu jing* 法句譬喻經 (T.04.0211).

Juan 2 in particular shows a very strong connection with the *Xianyujing* (*Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish*); in addition, *juan 3* also has many parallels with the *Xianyujing* and other texts as well. In these matching sections the times and places, the sequence of events, main personages and so on are all analogous, but the *Baoenjing* version is enlarged and is more expressive in its imagery, and in general much more in accord with the Mahāyāna

3 Naitō 1995. We are indebted to Professor Funayama Tōru of Kyōto University for pointing out to us the complexity of the structure of the *Baoenjing* and for helping us to locate Japanese scholarship on the subject.

tradition. *Juan 4* gathers together stories related, directly or indirectly, to the main theme of repaying kindness, attempting to fit them organically together. Usually in *jātaka* literature the stories stand alone but in this *sūtra* an attempt has been made to string them together thematically; however, at the same time they have preserved their original independent aspect.

The few passages in the text which discuss theory seem to have been taken almost verbatim from other sources. For example, the section beginning at line 557 in *juan 6* is the same as the entire first *juan* of the *Sapoduo pini piposha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 (T.23.1440; translator unknown).⁴ This is an outline of the state of precepts and it fits awkwardly in this place of the *Baoenjing*, with a number of peculiarities that make a strong case that this was not an organic part of the text but an interpolation. Then there are numerous places that match the *Pusa shanjie jing* 菩薩善戒經 (T.30.1582) translated by Guṇavarman 求那跋摩 ca. 431. There is a total of 272 lines matching this work and, judging from the content and the language of the translation, in terms of temporal priority they undoubtedly belong to the *Pusa shanjie jing*. All in all, Naitō is of the opinion that the *Baoenjing* is not a translation but a work that was compiled and edited in China from other sources. As for the date of the composition, the analysis of the sources behind it suggests a period between the middle and the end of the fifth century.

In a study on the authorship of the *sūtra*, the Taiwanese scholar Lin Hsien-ting 林顯庭, though unaware of Naitō's work, makes a similar observation that Chapter 8 of the *sūtra* was copied from the *Sapoduo pini piposha*, whereas large portions in other chapters came from the *Xianyu jing*.⁵ He uses the evidence from early catalogues to advance the hypothesis that the current version of the *Baoenjing* in seven *juan* was compiled by Sengyou and his disciple Baochang 寶唱 in the early sixth century.

More recent research on the *Baoenjing* shows a similar preference for considering the *sūtra* a compilation made from existing Chinese sources. In her discussion of the Chinese translation of the *Faju piyu jing* 法句譬喻經 (T.04.0221), Kamitsuka Yoshiko also addresses the issue of identical passages between the two *sūtras*.⁶ She sees the *Faju piyu jing* translation as the primary source, and the corresponding portions in the *Baoenjing* as a borrowing. In addition, she points out that the language of these parts is an

4 Here Naitō relies on the work of the eminent Japanese Buddhologist Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙 (1916).

5 Lin Hsien-ting 1987.

6 Kamitsuka 2001, vol. 2: 289–90.

even and relatively easy to read classical Chinese which would be highly anachronous in a translation from the Later Han period. Instead, claims Kamitsuka, it is more likely that the *Baoenjing* was formed as a result of editing a series of already translated stories and bringing them together into a narrative on the general theme of Buddha's repaying kindness.

The above analyses, especially that of Naitō, reveal that the *Baoenjing* was not a direct translation from an existing Sanskrit sūtra but a compilation based on Chinese sources.⁷ Naturally, these sources themselves were mostly translations so it would not be correct to consider the sūtra a genuinely native Chinese work either.⁸ Similarly, linguistic study of particular grammatical structures and vocabulary could help to date particular sections of analyzed text, but not the compilation of the work as a whole. At the same time, it is also important to point out that in the earliest known manuscript examples, even if some of these are extremely fragmentary, the *Baoenjing* is remarkably close to its transmitted version, with only occasional discrepancies on the level of individual characters. Therefore it would be unjustified to view the sūtra as a result of a long process of gradual editing; instead, it is more realistic to assume that it was put together within a relatively short period of time.

7.4 The *Baoenjing* as part of a manuscript tradition

Because of the dispersed nature of the Dunhuang material, it is hard to provide an exact figure regarding the number of *Baoenjing* manuscripts and fragments that form part of this vast corpus. As cataloguing work advances,

7 An exception is the work of Fang Yixin (2001, 2003, 2005), who has published several articles in which he examines the linguistic features of the sūtra and attempts to determine when it was translated into Chinese. Based on his analysis of the vocabulary and grammar he comes to the conclusion that the sūtra cannot have been translated earlier than the Three Kingdoms period (220–280). Unfortunately, the author assumes that the text is a homogenous translation and thus his findings are not necessarily reflective of the period when the sūtra was compiled. For example, when Fang (2001: 51) analyzes the phrase *liuhuai* 留懷 he seems to be unaware that this entire section is a borrowing from a text called *Jinglü yixiang* 經律異相 (T.53.2121: 0131c), a translation attributed to the early sixth century.

8 The division of Chinese sūtras into the well-defined categories of translations and apocrypha has been studied by Funayama Tōru. He stresses the need for a third category for works like the *Baoenjing* which can be identified neither as translations nor as completely forged texts (see Funayama 2002 and 2006). On the subject of Chinese apocryphal sūtras in general, see also the papers in Buswell 1992.

more items are recognized and this increases the overall count. Writing for the *Dunhuangxue dacidian* 敦煌學大辭典 in 1998, Fang Guangchang counted forty-eight items as belonging to this sūtra.⁹ A decade later in 2009 Professor Fang was able to identify eighty-three items.¹⁰ Needless to say, some of these fragments can be proven to have belonged together, thus the actual number of individual manuscript witnesses is smaller than this. Still, these items testify to the general popularity of the *Baoenjing* in the Dunhuang area. That the sūtra was part of local Buddhist lore not only as a text but perhaps to an even greater extent as a liturgical tradition is evidenced by the high ratio of related visual representations among the murals in the Dunhuang caves and the silk paintings found at the library cave.¹¹ While the number of textual witnesses is insignificant in comparison with the thousands of copies of the most popular sūtras in Dunhuang, such as the *Lotus sūtra* or the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra*, the *Baoenjing* features prominently in contemporary art.¹²

As for the text of the sūtra, in addition to over eighty scrolls and fragments from Dunhuang, a few copies have been found in other regions of China, including a Uighur language version from Turfan and a printed fragment from the wooden pagoda at Ying County 應縣, Shanxi Province.¹³ The foremost impression these manuscripts make is their striking similarity to the modern version of the text, testifying to the accuracy of the process of textual transmission with regard to the Buddhist canon. This is, of course,

9 Ji Xianlin 1998: 671.

10 Professor Fang was kind enough to provide us with a comprehensive list based on his electronic catalogue database. Personal communication on March 28, 2009 during a conference in Seoul.

11 Note the comment made by Teiser (1994: 76), that “religious life in medieval societies did not revolve around books. The written record is indeed the major source of the historian’s knowledge of the past, but that limitation should not delude us into thinking that texts were the primary vehicles of knowledge for most people in medieval China.”

12 For a conveniently assembled collection of photographs documenting the murals with *Baoenjing* motifs see Yin Guangming 2001.

13 In 1974 while the wooden pagoda of the Fogong Temple was being repaired, a series of artefacts were recovered from inside broken statues, including printed and handwritten copies of Buddhist scriptures dating to the Liao dynasty. Although some of these writings were long scrolls, the majority of them were smaller fragments. The *Baoenjing* fragment is a small part of an original scroll, with only 9 incomplete lines remaining, including the title for Chapter 8 (see Shanxi sheng wenwuju 1991: 37).

true not solely for the manuscripts of the *Baoenjing* but for early copies of most other canonical sūtras as well.¹⁴

Before we turn to the particular copy of the *Baoenjing* found in the manuscript that travelled through the Hexi corridor with our monk Daozhao, it may be useful to take a look at some of the other surviving manuscripts of the sūtra. Our objective here is not to give a comprehensive inventory and analysis of each and every copy but to introduce a smaller number of selected items that are particularly interesting with respect to the sūtra's manuscript tradition.

7.4.1 *Uighur manuscripts*

Pelliot chinois 3509 is a Uighur manuscript in a notebook format, with 20 sheets of paper sewn together into 40 leaves, comprising a total number of 80 pages. Each page holds 7–8 lines of text. The paper is thick and coarse, and brownish-gray in colour. In addition, two other small fragments of this text are known: Or.8212/118 held at the British Library in London, and U 120 (Digital Archive I) held at the National Library in Berlin. The manuscripts in Paris and London are both from Dunhuang but the one in Berlin is from Yarkhoto, near Turfan. This latter partly overlaps with Or.8212/118 and also contains a short passage which corresponds to the missing portion between Pelliot chinois 3509 and Or.8212/118.¹⁵

The text on Pelliot chinois 3509 has been referred to as the “Story of the bad and good princes” and was first translated into French by Clément Huart in 1914.¹⁶ Dissatisfied with Huart's work, Paul Pelliot published a new translation within a couple of months.¹⁷ Later in the same year, Édouard Chavannes also contributed to the study of this text by providing a translation of the Chinese version of the corresponding parts from the *Baoenjing*.¹⁸ He pointed out that the *Baoenjing* was a closer match to the Uighur text than the *Xianyuqing* identified by Pelliot. He also believed at the time, seeing no reason to distrust the traditional attribution of the text to a Later Han translator, that the *Baoenjing* was older than the *Xianyuqing*. After these three translation efforts the sūtra was not studied for a long

14 A Tibetan translation of the sūtra from the Chinese has survived in the Tibetan canon. See Stein 1973: 218 and Stein 2010: 95.

15 We are grateful to Professor Peter Zieme who was kind enough to clarify the relationship of the three Uighur fragments for us. Also, see Zieme 1974.

16 Huart 1914.

17 Pelliot 1914.

18 Chavannes 1914. Pelliot's edition (with the translation of the Chinese version by Chavannes) was later also used to prepare a Turkish version of the text (Orkun 1940).

time, until in 1971 James Hamilton published a monograph dedicated to the study and translation of Pelliot chinois 3509, including photographs of the original notebook pages.¹⁹

Although from the point of view of its content and the sequence of narrative the closest match to the Uighur version of the *jātaka* is Chapter 6 (“Prince Eyou”) of the Chinese *Baoenjing*, it is not a direct translation either, at least not of the extant version of the Chinese text.²⁰ There are some details that do not match; for example, when the good prince pleads to the king for opening the treasuries to help the suffering people, in the Chinese version the treasures are loaded onto five hundred elephants, but there is no mention of this in the Uighur version.²¹

7.4.2 Dated manuscripts

Of the Chinese versions of the *sūtra*, several are either explicitly dated or can be dated with a relatively high degree of reliability. The oldest of these is Or.8210/S.4284 in the Stein collection at the British Library, a seventh century manuscript with a dated colophon, translated by Lionel Giles as follows:

今貞觀十五年七月八日，菩薩戒弟子辛聞香，弟子為失鄉破落、離別父母、生死各不相知，奉為慈父亡妣敬造《報恩經》一部，後願弟子父母生生之處，殖(值)佛聞法，常生尊貴，莫逕三塗八難。願弟子將來世中，父母眷屬，莫相捨離，善願從心，具登正覺。

Now, on the eighth day of the seventh moon of the fifteenth year of Zhenguan [19th August, 641], the disciple of Bodhisattva-pratimokṣa Xin Wenxiang, who lost his home and became a waif, separated from his parents, neither party knowing whether the other were alive or dead, has reverently caused a section of the *Baoenjing* to be copied on behalf of his gracious father and his deceased mother, following it with a prayer that wheresoever his parents may be reborn they may meet Buddha and hear the preaching of his Law, and that they may always be born in an honourable station of life, without passing through the three unhappy states of existence or the eight calamities. He also prays that his own future

¹⁹ Hamilton 1971.

²⁰ Chavannes (1914: 30) already makes the point that the two versions do not completely match and that the Uighur version cannot be considered a direct translation of the Chinese.

²¹ Yang Fuxue 1995: 14–15.

parents and kinsfolk in this world may never be parted from him, that virtuous prayers may be granted, and that all may come to a condition of perfect enlightenment.²²

In this case there is an obvious connection with the content of the *sūtra* and the motivation behind creating a copy of it, in that Xin Wenxiang is devoting the merits obtained from the act of copying to the memory of his parents.

In addition to this, at least four *Baoenjing* manuscripts from Dunhuang include character forms instituted by Empress Wu (武周新字) in avoidance of the name taboos associated with her reign. Although there have been indications that these newly invented characters may occasionally occur after the Empress's abdication, in general they are believed to date fairly reliably to the years of her reign, i.e. 690–705.²³ These four manuscripts are Or.8210/S.3683, B446, B448, and B449, each containing several of the characters invented during the reign of the Empress.²⁴ In Or.8210/S.3683, for example, the characters 天, 人, 地, 正, 初 and 日 are written as 𐰚, 𐰚, 𐰚, 𐰚, 𐰚 and 𐰚, respectively.

In addition, Pelliot chinois 2893 is a copy of *juan* 4 of the *Baoenjing* with a colophon saying, “Record copying done on behalf of the monks Xingkong and Daoyuan by a hired hand.” Because of the Khotanese text on the verso of the manuscript, it is reasonable to assume that this is the same Daoyuan who is mentioned in Chinese historical sources as having lived in Khotan for a whole decade. His name also comes up in Or.8210/S.6264 which is an ordination certificate from Khotan with the date of the 3rd year of Tianxing (961).²⁵ We know from the *Wenxian tongkao* (*juan* 337), that Daoyuan travelled to India and on his way back stayed in Khotan for ten years, finally returning to China in the third year of Qiande (965).²⁶ The verso of Pelliot chinois 2893 contains a Khotanese medical text,²⁷ which suggests that it was brought back by Daoyuan after he returned from Khotan.

22 Giles 1935b: 11.

23 See Galambos 2004: 72–79.

24 Based on a close comparison of the calligraphic idiosyncrasies of the Dunhuang versions of the *Baoenjing*, we are of the opinion that B446, B448 and B449 were in reality written by the same hand. On similar grounds, we can also establish that manuscripts B445 from Beijing and Or.8210/S.5115 from London were also written by the same person, although this does not help us in dating them.

25 This suggestion of linking Daoyuan in Pelliot chinois 2893 with the monk featuring in S.6264 and in historical texts is raised in Zhang and Rong (1984: 37).

26 A translation of this passage can be found earlier in Chapter 3.

27 Emmerick (1979: 45) writes that this manuscript has the longest known medical text in Khotanese.

Based on their connection with Daoyuan, we can roughly date Pel-liot chinois 2893 to the decade following 965 when Daoyuan returned to China from his trip. Naturally, this also means that this manuscript is the closest in time to the Daozhao manuscript. The presence of non-Chinese texts of practical nature written on the verso after the Chinese had been completed also points to a connection with our Manuscript B. Even if we find no additional clues that would tie these two manuscripts together, we can still safely conclude that they were the products of the same Buddhist pilgrimage movement that took place in the second half of the tenth century.

7.4.3 Codicological features

As we have seen, the length of the Dunhuang manuscripts of the *Baoenjing* varies; some are longer scrolls while others are only short fragments. Most of the manuscripts were originally written as just one *juan* of this long sūtra. Indeed, there is not a single manuscript which has the complete text of the whole sūtra. The manuscripts with intact beginnings or endings show that their medieval scribes created them as partial copies, usually one *juan* per scroll.

The majority of the manuscripts are written in the standard sūtra format with 17 characters per line and 27–28 lines per panel. The number of characters in reality can vary between 16–18 but most of them preserve the standard 17-character format. When this number deviates from the norm, it is invariably larger. For example, F094 from St. Petersburg has 20–21 characters per line; B444 from Beijing, 27–33 characters. The latter is exceptional not only in its small script, which allows a large number of characters to be jammed into one line but also that it contains five of the nine chapters of the complete *Baoenjing*, which together make up the first three *juan*. Thus this is the longest extant manuscript of the sūtra. Oddly, the text ends with two thirds of the panel empty, and the last fifteen characters of the chapter missing, thus stopping half-way through the last sentence. Also missing is the title of the sūtra, which is usually used as a closing mark of a finished section. Since it is unlikely that a scribe would have stopped for a break a few characters before the end of a long chapter, his copying must have been interrupted by an external cause.

In terms of codicological features, the *Baoenjing* manuscripts are similar to other Buddhist sūtras from Dunhuang. Before writing on the paper, a grid was drawn on the panels to ensure that the lines were written evenly.

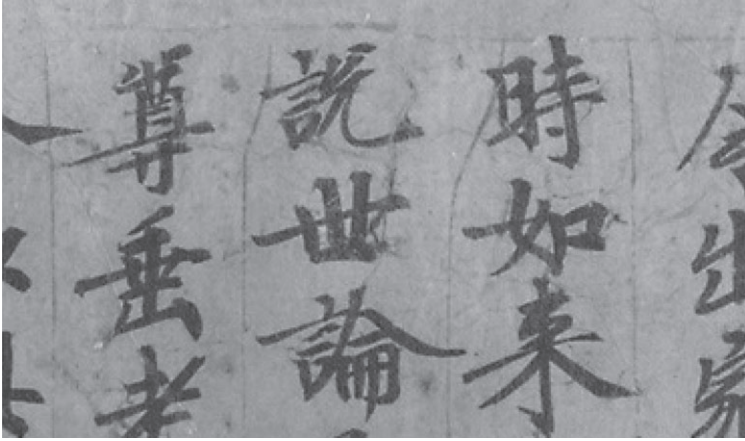


Fig.12 A section of Manuscript B showing how some of the vertical gridlines sway to the right. This shows that these vertical lines were drawn from the bottom up, using a ruler which did not reach the horizontal grid on the top of the manuscript.

The grid was not impressed using a frame but drawn using a brush or pen and a ruler. This is evidenced by the fact that (i) some of the grid lines run over each other at intersections, and (ii) sometimes the ends of vertical lines sway to the side, showing where they lost the support of the ruler (Figure 12).

It is likely that in many manuscripts the calligraphy was applied before the panels were glued together into a scroll, although this is still a debated point. We can find traces of this on some manuscripts where a panel covers part of the characters on the last line of the previous panel. This can happen only if the new panel was glued onto the surface of the previous one after the writing was already present on it. This is true, however, only with regard to the recto of the manuscript, that is, the side written on first. The verso was usually written after the panels had been joined into a continuous scroll, and thus the scribe often ignores the location of the joining lines, boldly writing over them. On Pelliot chinois 2893, for example, the Khotanese text on the verso sometimes begins a line on one panel and as it strays to the left finishes on the other (see below).

As customary for manuscript copies of Buddhist sūtras, the title appears at the beginning and end of each chapter. The seven *juan* of the *Baoenjing* are only referred to by numbers, whereas the nine chapters (*pin*) also have

specific titles in addition to their numbers. The use of the *juan* and chapter numbers shows a clear pattern: the beginning of the chapter is always marked by a chapter number, and the end with a *juan* number. Thus Or.8210/S.434 begins with the title *Dafangbian Fo baoenjing Youboli pin di ba* 大方便佛報恩經優波離品第八 (“Sūtra of the great means used by the Buddha to repay kindness, Chapter 8: Upāli”). Sometimes the *juan* number might be indicated on the same line, towards the lower section of the page, but in most cases it is absent.

In contrast with this, the end of the chapter is always marked by the title of the sūtra and the *juan* number. Accordingly, Or.8210/S.4623 ends with the title *Dafangbian Fo baoenjing juan di wu* 大方便佛報恩經卷第五 (“Sūtra of the great means used by the Buddha to repay kindness, *juan* 5”). In the first two *juan* of the sūtra which have two chapters each and the end of a chapter does not automatically mean the end of the *juan*, the chapter title is omitted and instead the next chapter begins with its own title. It seems that the *juan* represented the basic codicological unit and that a chapter that did not make up a whole *juan* would not have been written on an independent manuscript. B444, which we have already mentioned above, is a long scroll with the first five chapters of the sūtra, which also correspond to its first three *juan*; because of its length it provides a good example of the above principles. The beginning of Chapter 1 (also of *juan* 1) is marked with the chapter title; the end of Chapter 1 is left unmarked, and instead the beginning of Chapter 2 is immediately marked with its chapter title; the end of Chapter 2 (also of *juan* 1) is then marked with the *juan* number; and so on.

The codicological features of Pelliot chinois 2893 present an especially intriguing case, especially because in several respects it is reminiscent of the Daozhao manuscript. On the verso containing the Khotanese text, the name of Daoyuan is written at the junction of the panels, towards the edge of the paper in two places (Figure 13). In one case the character is written exactly on the line where the panels are joined, revealing that this was done after the panels were glued together. This suggests that the paper itself was already associated with Daoyuan, perhaps allocated to him by the monastery where he and his fellow monk Xingkong commissioned the copying of the *Baoenjing*.

The Khotanese text is less compact than the Chinese, with only 20–21 lines per panel. The distance between the lines is manifestly uneven. The grid lines are thick and faint, with the text written right through the middle of each line, like beads on a thread (Figure 13). Because the lines often stray from vertical, in some cases the line begins on one panel and, with a slight

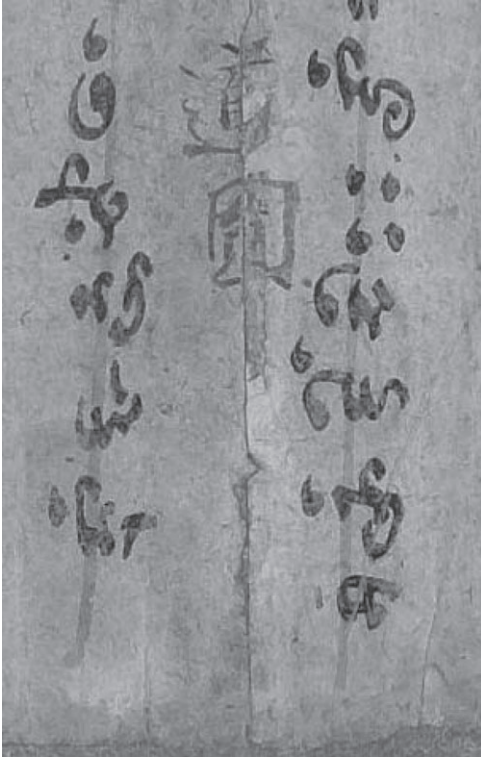


Fig.13 Daoyuan's name on the verso of Pelliot chinois 2893 in between the Khotanese text. The two faint Chinese characters were written exactly on the line where the panels are joined, clearly after the panels had been glued together. The image also shows the faint grid lines running through the middle of the Khotanese text.

Image © Bibliothèque nationale de France.

bend, ends on the next one.²⁸ This makes it evident that the Khotanese text was written after the panels were glued together into a scroll, that is, after the Chinese *Baoenjing* was already complete. This is further confirmed by the observation that bits of Khotanese text appear on the Chinese side of the manuscript, and in each case these are positioned on the margins or between the lines to avoid overwriting the Chinese text. It is quite likely that the *Baoenjing* was in some way significant for the Khotanese writer and he did not regard it as simply scrap paper which he could recycle.²⁹

28 This is surprising because one would expect the grid lines to be straight, especially if they had been drawn before the text. In this case, however, they appear to have been created after the text was written, which, of course, negates them having served as a guide for the text.

29 This also resembles the *Baoenjing* in the Daozhao manuscript, which has Tibetan tantric texts on its other side. The short segments of Tibetan writing on the Chinese side of the manuscript (see Figure 7.2) show a deliberate effort to stay clear of the Chinese text.

A surprising aspect of the physical condition of Pelliot chinois 2893 is that although it is a continuous scroll, part of the text that would have comprised panels 5 and 6 is missing from the middle of the sūtra. The two panels containing the missing segment of the *Baoenjing* on the recto and the Khotanese medical treatise on the verso were acquired at Dunhuang by Aurel Stein and today are part of the India Office Library collection (IOL Khot S 9).³⁰ What is striking about the removal of this portion of the manuscript is that it did not happen in modern times – the sūtra was dismantled, or perhaps fell apart, and was glued back together sometime during the tenth century, with these two panels left out. It would be interesting to know whether this mutilation was done with a specific purpose in mind, or the two panels were left out by mere negligence.³¹

These two panels are not the only ones missing from the manuscript. If we compare the text of Pelliot chinois 2893 with the standard version of the sūtra, we can see that the manuscript does not start at the beginning of the chapter. Knowing that each panel in this scroll consists of 27 lines and each line of 17 characters, we can easily calculate that at least three complete panels are absent from the beginning of the scroll. At the same time, in its current form the first panel of the manuscript is worn from use and has only 11 lines, which means that about 30 cm of the panel is missing. This type of damage is common among the Dunhuang manuscripts, and is usually an indication that this was in fact the first panel located on the outmost part of the rolled up scroll. What it tells us is that sometime after this copy of the *Baoenjing* was commissioned by Daoyuan and Xingkong, some of the panels came apart, and even after this the sūtra was in heavy use. Since the Dunhuang cave library was closed in the early years of the eleventh century, all of this must have happened in the course of some four decades at the most.

7.5 Significance of Manuscript B recto as a composition

In terms of its codicological characteristics, our Manuscript B recto shows no particular idiosyncrasies, fitting in well with the other copies of the *Baoenjing*. Among these other copies, Pelliot chinois 2893 from the Pel-

30 We are grateful to H  l  ne Vetch for alerting us to many details concerning this manuscript and the missing panels kept in London.

31 Another example of the same phenomenon is Or.8212/187, the recto of which has the *Yaoshijing* 藥師經, and the verso Version II of the *Old Tibetan Annals*.

liot collection, as well as its two missing panels now held in London (IOL Khot S 9), should be pointed out as the closest connection. They all date to approximately the same decade (ca. 960s) and are associated with, and represent the product of, the mass pilgrimage movement recorded in historical sources as having happened during this time (and described in Chapter 3 above). In fact, these manuscripts were carried along with the only two parties of pilgrims we can conclusively connect with this movement on the basis of the Dunhuang material: (i) Daoyuan and Xingkong; and (ii) our monk Daozhao. It is all the more surprising then that each party carried a copy of part of the *Baoenjing*: Manuscript B comprised *juan* 3, whereas Pelliot chinois 2893 comprised *juan* 4. In addition, non-Chinese ritual texts were written on the verso of each of these manuscripts; in the case of Pelliot chinois 2893 in Khotanese, and in the case of Manuscript B, in Tibetan.

Connecting these two copies of the *Baoenjing* to the Buddhist pilgrimage movement during the second half of the tenth century inevitably raises the question of what significance the sūtra had in this context. In light of the above, it seems highly unlikely, as it has been often suggested, that the sūtra was simply recycled because of the scarcity of paper, and what was on the other side of the paper mattered little to the scribe writing the Tibetan or Khotanese. Instead, what seems more likely is that the *Baoenjing* was chosen deliberately and still maintained some level of liturgical significance when the non-Chinese text was added to its verso. In the case of the Daozhao manuscript, the creation of a composite textual object did not stop at using up the available space on the two sides of the scrolls but was further augmented by gluing two other manuscripts to it.

Was there something about the *Baoenjing* that lent it particular significance for pilgrims? There is little in the content of the sūtra that could be explicitly linked with a pilgrimage to India. The only episode that has some relevance to travelling is the jātaka in Chapter 9 about the young Brahmin who was on the road with 500 other travellers whom he saved by killing the scout of a group of bandits, thus effectively sacrificing his own karma for the lives of his companions. While this story has some significance for travelling safely through a bandit-infested territory, the two *Baoenjing* manuscripts introduced above do not include this part of the sūtra. In the absence of any explicit textual link between the text of the *Baoenjing* and the pilgrimage, it is possible that the connection was part of a local tradition. A different group of people at a different time would have chosen a different text, according to their own regional preferences or monastic traditions.

We still know very little about the way Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts were used in a ritual context, but there is ample evidence that their physi-

cality had a significance beyond just being a carrier of text. We should not assume that our monk carried *juan* 3 of the *Baoenjing* with him simply because he wanted to read it from time to time while he was on the road. This is even more true for the Tibetan tantric texts on the verso of the manuscript, as his introduction letters were glued on top of them. Accordingly, beside their textual content the texts were equally important in their material presence as devotional objects.

8 The Tibetan Tantric Texts

8.1 Tibetan Tantric Buddhism in the tenth century

The Tibetan texts written on the verso of the Chinese *Baoenjing* are all tantric in character.¹ More specifically, they belong to the tantric movement known as Mahāyoga, ‘the great yoga’, which became increasingly popular in Tibet during the tenth century.² Thus this manuscript is situated in the centre of the Tibetan tantric movements of this period. As we saw in Chapter 4 above, the Tibetan Empire disintegrated in the middle of the ninth century, leading to an extended period of disruption traditionally known as the ‘age of fragmentation’. As we saw in Chapter 4, traditional Tibetan histories see the age of fragmentation as a dark period ushered in by a persecution of Buddhism by the emperor Lang Darma (r. 841–842), and characterized by the corruption of pure Buddhism by decadent tantric practices. Contemporary accounts from the tenth century confirm that this was a common view at the time. One of these is found in a manuscript from Dunhuang (Pelliot tibétain 840/3). It begins with celebratory verses on the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet during the reigns of the early kings, and then contrasts this with the period from the reign of King Darma onwards:

From the Divine Son Darma on down,
And from his descendent Ösung on down
In general the dharma spread and flourished,
Spread and flourished excessively, it’s said,
So that everyone born as a human wanted to accomplish it.

1 The problematics of the terms “tantra” and “tantric” have been discussed by several scholars. It is clear that they should be understood as modern terms relating to a modern categorization of Buddhist literature, which identifies a “tantric” literature categorized by certain features, including visualization, mantra recitation, the use of gesture (*mudrā*), and empowerment ceremonies. Yet there are problems in this kind of categorization, especially when certain texts contain some “tantric” elements, yet are clearly different from fully-developed tantras.

2 On the manuscript evidence for the development of Mahāyoga during the tenth century, see van Schaik 2008a and 2008b.

...

For every hundred students there are a thousand teachers,
 And nobody listens to the divine dharma.
 For every village there are ten masters,
 And the number of vajra assistants is uncountable.
 Everyone thinks “I am accomplished as the deity.”
 In the end, since there are so many of this type,
 Won’t the vajra body be destroyed?³

On the other side of Tibet, a similar account was published in an open letter by the king of Puhrang, Yeshé Ö (*Ye shes ’od*), around the year 980. The king begins by specifying the village tantrikas as the object of his broadside:

You tantrikas who live in the villages,
 Have no connection with the three vehicles,
 Yet you say “we follow the Great Vehicle.”⁴

After eulogizing the Buddhism practised during the Tibetan Empire, the king then goes on to list the false practices (as he sees them) that have become popular since the end of the Empire:

A false doctrine bearing the name of Great Perfection has spread through
 Tibet,
 And is binding [people] with a false view.
 False mantras bearing the name of the Dharma have spread through
 Tibet,
 Bringing disaster upon the kingdom in the following ways:
 As ‘liberation’ spreads, goats and sheep are roped up and killed;
 As ‘union’ spreads, the different classes of people are mixed up;

3 Pelliot tibétain 840/3, ll.5–11: /lha sras dar ma man chad dang/ /’od sru[ng]s dbon sras man chad du/ /spyi na dam chos dar cing rgyas/ /ha cang dar cing rgyas ces pas/ /myir skyes kun kyang ’grub par bzhed/ /gsum khirms ’dul khirms myi shes par/ /las kyi rdo rje bong bus nyo/ /las kyi dbang dang myi ldan bar/ /’dren pa’i slobd dpon glang gis nyo/ /’dren pa’i dbang dang myi ldan bar/ /rdo rje rgyal ’tshab rta ’is nyo/ /rgyal ’tshab dbang dang myi ldan bar/ /rdo rje rgyal po btson gyis nyo//drod dang tshod dang ma sbyar ba’i/ /nor kar bor ba’i slobd dpon gyis/ /’jig rten ’das pa’i don myi rig/ /slobd ma brgya la slobd dpon stong/ /lha chos nyan pa’i myi ma chis/ /grong tsan gcig la slobd dpon bcu/ /las kyi rdo rje gra[ng]s kyang myed/ /kun kyang lha ru ’grub snyam ste/ /mjug du sde tsan mang po yis/ /rdo rje phung po bzhig ga re/.

4 ll.19–21: grong na gnas pa’i mkhan po sngags pa rnams/ theg pa de gsum dang ’brel med par/ nged cag theg chen yin zhes zer ba ni/ (Karmay 1998: 14).

As the medical rituals spread, medicines are used up by the sick;
 As the ritual of the corpse has spread, the cemeteries are empty of offerings;
 As the ritual of sacrifice has spread, people are 'liberated' while still alive;
 As flesh-eating demons are worshipped there is sickness among men and animals;
 As the smoke of incense rituals has been abandoned, the local deities and subterranean spirits have abandoned us.⁵

Thus the king paints a picture of a Tibet in which teachings pretending to be Buddhist are used to permit all kinds of vice. The doctrine of the Great Perfection, a transcendental discourse on the ultimate state, speaks of a freedom from good and evil, virtue and vice. This, according to the king, is a false view. Furthermore, he laments the spread of the specific practices he calls "false mantras" (here, *mantra* may be taken as a general term for tantric practices), including the violent rites of killing known as 'liberation' and the sexual rites known as 'union'.

The complaints of Yeshé Ö and the anonymous author of the Dunhuang poem may be a kind of literary trope of the tenth century rather than direct reportage. Nevertheless, it is striking that most of the practices mentioned here by the king are to be found among the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts. Recent work on dating the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang has shown that many of them, and in particular those with tantric content, can be dated to the second half of the tenth century, roughly contemporaneous with the above poems on the decline of Buddhism. Together, these sources suggest a period during which tantric Buddhist rituals became very popular in Tibet at the level of ordinary, non-monastic, village practitioners.

Indeed, it is likely that the collapse of sponsored monastic Buddhism following the fall of the Tibetan Empire allowed Buddhism to penetrate Tibetan culture much more thoroughly than before. Buddhism ceased to be the property of the aristocracy and the monasteries that they patronised, and came into the ownership of the ordinary Tibetans of the villages. While

5 ll.45–55: rdzogs chen ming btags chos log bod du dar/ lta ba phyin ci log gi sar thogs pa/ chos par ming btags sngags log bod du bar/ de yis rgyal khams phung ste 'di ltar gyur/ sgrol ba dar bas ra lug nyal thag bcad/ sbyor ba dar bas mi rigs 'chol ba 'dres/ sman sgrub dar bas nad pas gsod rkyen chad/ bam sgrub dar bas dur sa'i mchod pa stong/ mchod sgrub dar bas mi la gson sgrol byung/ sring po sha za mchod pas mi nad phyugs nad byung/ me bsur dud pa btang bas yul gyi lha klu 'phangs/ (Karmay 1998: 15). On the political context of Yeshé Ö's activities, see Dalton 2011.

tantric Buddhism had been controlled and largely suppressed during the Tibetan imperial period, the end of the empire allowed this material to circulate much more freely. The ritual practices specified by Yeshé Ö cover the basic ritual needs of a community: medicine, death rituals and the propitiation of harmful spirits. These rituals are well represented in the Dunhuang manuscripts, as are the Mahāyoga practices of 'liberation' and 'union'. However, if the anonymous poem from Dunhuang and the account of Yeshé Ö imply a host of semi-literate, ritual-obsessed pseudo-Buddhists, the Dunhuang manuscripts imply to the contrary a culture of educated and literate practitioners of Tibetan tantric Buddhism during the age of fragmentation. Thus these negative accounts should not be taken entirely at face value. While the problems they highlight were no doubt real, the tenth century also saw the germination of a truly Tibetan form of Buddhism.

The Tibetan tantric manuscripts from Dunhuang are a varied and apparently haphazardly assembled group. They do not represent any kind of canonical or even proto-canonical collection, and there are in fact only a very few actual tantras represented in the collection. One of these is the classic Mahāyoga tantra usually known as the *Guhyasamāja*.⁶ Another Mahāyoga tantra, the *Upāyapāśa*, is also found here, embedded in a commentary attributed to the great sage and sorcerer Padmasambhava (fl. eighth c). More commonly found in the Dunhuang collections are treatises on tantric theory and practice; the third of the texts on our scroll is one of these. Some of these treatises are written in a literary style, often with citations from scripture; one such, the *Questions and Answers on Vajrasattva*, was preserved in the Tibetan canon. Another represents the teachings of a forgotten Indian paṇḍita called Madhusādhū.⁷ However, most of the treatises are shorter and less well written, and have no counterpart in the canons of the later Tibetan tradition. These seem to be the result of individual teaching situations, and are often found written in manuscripts alongside other texts.

The remainder of the tantric manuscripts, forming the bulk of the collection, are short texts intended for recitation and meditation practice. These are the long syllable strings known as *dhāraṇī*, the meditation instructions known as *sādhana* and the short ritual manuals known as *vidhi*. The verso of Manuscript B begins with a *sādhana* explaining a meditation practice

6 Others are the **Candraguhyatilaka*, the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-adhyardhaśatikā* (also called the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-śatapañcāśatikā*) and the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*. On the versions of these tantras found in the Stein collection, see Dalton and van Schaik 2006.

7 On these two treatises, see Takahashi 2010 and van Schaik 2008b. On the *Upāyapāśa* commentary, see Cantwell and Mayer 2010.

focussed on the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, followed by a *sādhana* for a ritual of the deity Vajrakīlaya. The third item is a brief treatise on Mahāyoga meditation practice. This is followed by a brief ritual text ending at the very bottom of the scroll; a similar brief ritual is written overleaf, in between the Chinese text of the *Baoenjing* on the recto of the scroll.

8.2 On the contents of these texts

(i) *A sādhana of Avalokiteśvara*

One of the enduring features of Tibetan Buddhism is the pre-eminence of the deity Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion. Until recently, the popularity of Avalokiteśvara was thought to date to later period of Buddhism in Tibet, from the eleventh century onwards. It is now known that Avalokiteśvara features in many Dunhuang texts, among which the *sādhana* on our scroll stands out as the only Mahāyoga practice featuring this bodhisattva. Most of the forms of Avalokiteśvara found in the later tradition are represented in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The simplest aspect of the deity has one face and two arms. We also find the form with eleven heads called *Ekādaśa-mukha* (*Zhal bcu gcig pa*). There is also the form with a thousand arms and a thousand eyes, *Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra* (*Phyag stong spyang stong dang ldan pa*). We have Avalokiteśvara holding a wish-fulfilling jewel and a wheel, known as *Cintāmaṇicakra* (*Yid bzhin 'khor lo*). Finally, there is Avalokiteśvara in the form known as “the unfailing noose,” *Amoghapāśa* (*Don yod zhags pa*), very popular in Dunhuang. The Dunhuang texts devoted to Avalokiteśvara are overwhelmingly tantric in nature, and include funerary texts, *dhāraṇī*, hymns of praise known as *stotras*, and *sādhanas*.⁸

One of the roles of Avalokiteśvara in the tenth century was as a guide for the dead. In the 1970s some important Tibetan Dunhuang texts on after-death states featuring Avalokiteśvara were discussed by Rolf Stein and Ariane Macdonald.⁹ A compendium of short texts also concerned with death and the after-death state was examined by Yoshiro Imaeda. One of these, called *Overcoming the three poisons* (*Gdug gsum 'dul ba*), contained

⁸ For a complete review of these manuscripts, see van Schaik 2006.

⁹ See Stein 1970 and Macdonald 1971. The manuscript is Pelliot tibétain 239. A partial copy of the same text is in IOL Tib J 504. This Pelliot manuscript had previously been the subject of a short paper by Marcelle Lalou 1939 (note that Lalou refers to the manuscript as Pelliot tibétain 241, while Pelliot tibétain 239 is its number in her catalogue, published a year after the paper).

Avalokiteśvara's six-syllable mantra.¹⁰ These texts may be related to the 'rituals for the corpse' criticized by Yeshé Ö in the poem cited in the previous section.

There are at least twenty manuscripts containing *dhāraṇī* texts dedicated to Avalokiteśvara. Different texts are dedicated to the eleven-headed form, the thousand-armed form, and the Amoghapāśa form. Several of these texts appear in the later Tibetan canons, mostly in versions very similar to the Dunhuang texts. The *dhāraṇīs* are mostly variations on a single theme, beginning, *oṃ āryāvalokiteśvarāya bodhisattvāya mahāsattvāya mahākārunikāya*. The *dhāraṇī* of the thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara also addresses the deity as a *siddha-vidyādhara*, an accomplished esoteric adept. The next category of texts is the hymns of praise, or *stotra*. There are two such texts addressed to Avalokiteśvara, which appear in twenty-one manuscripts. The first text is a hymn to the deity in the six-armed form of Cintāmaṇicakra, and the second is an enumeration of the 108 epithets of Avalokiteśvara.¹¹

The last category of Avalokiteśvara texts, and the one that concerns us here, is the *sādhana*s. These texts cover a wide variety of concerns. At one end of the spectrum, we have ritual manuals for the attainment of worldly aims through practices like fire rituals (*homa*): the kind of text usually classified as *kriyā* or *caryā* tantra.¹² One 28-folio booklet (IOL Tib J 401) contains several such ritual texts, which invoke Avalokiteśvara in his thousand-armed form or in the form of Amoghapāśa. Most of these rituals are medical in nature, though some longer rituals are also included in this collection, including one for mirror divination, and one for making rain. In one ritual, the six-syllable mantra makes another cryptic appearance in the form: *Oṃ vajrayakṣa maṇi padme hūṃ*.¹³ Another *sādhana* aimed at worldly ends is found in IOL Tib J 384. According to this text, the maṇḍala is laid out on the ground, with a vase at the centre representing Amoghapāśa.¹⁴

10 Imaeda 1979. The manuscripts are IOL Tib J 420 and IOL Tib J 421. The two forms of the mantra, which add extra syllables to the usual six, are *oṃ ma ni pad me hūṃ myi tra svā ha & oṃ maṇi pad me// hum mye//*.

11 This text does appear, in a nearly identical form, in the *Bka' 'gyur*: P.381.

12 We have employed the basic divisions of the Tibetan traditional classifications of tantric literature, with the provision that they are not to be understood as a reading of later Tibetan doxographical categories onto this early literature. Nevertheless, the categories are very useful in identifying thematic links and differences between texts, and all of the terms used here were in use by the tenth century.

13 IOL Tib J 401, 4r.1.

14 There seems to be some relationship with the maṇḍala diagram in the Dunhuang manuscript kept at the National Museum of New Delhi (Ch.00379), in which a vase is

Other Avalokiteśvara sādhanas are directed toward the transcendental aim of enlightenment. One well-represented sādhana seems to be based on the Yoga tantras.¹⁵ Here, Avalokiteśvara is white in colour and has two arms, one in the gesture of giving refuge and one holding a red lotus. He sits cross-legged on a lotus. To the left of him is the consort Dharmasattvī. The meditator is to develop the vajra pride in himself as Bhagavān Śrī Dharmasattva which seems to be another name for this form of Avalokiteśvara. This is in accord with the fundamental Yoga tantra *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha tantra*, in which Avalokiteśvara belongs to the dharma family. The other deities of the maṇḍala are the standard eight offering goddess and four gate guardians of Yoga tantra literature. There is a visualization and recitation of “the root mantra of the heart[-mantra] of approach: *Oṃ vajradharma hrī*’.¹⁶ This mantra is based on the seed syllables of Avalokiteśvara according to the Vajradhātu maṇḍala of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*.¹⁷

The Avalokiteśvara sādhana in the Daozhao manuscript is of particular significance as the only sādhana of this deity that may be categorized as Mahāyoga. The text is missing its beginning, which is at the fragmentary top end of Manuscript B. From an infra-red image of this portion of the scroll, we can see that the sādhana begins with a nonconceptual meditation practice, instructing the meditator not to think (*myi sems*) or focus (*myi dmyigs*). This is the usual opening of a Mahāyoga sādhana, known as ‘the concentration on suchness’ (*de bzhin nyid gi ting nge ’dzin*), the first of the three concentrations of Mahāyoga. The following two lines describe the next concentration, which is explicitly named here as ‘the concentration on total illumination’ (*kun tu snang ba*). Thirdly, we can also make out that the third concentration, that of ‘the cause’ (*rgyu’i ting nge ’dzin*) is also mentioned.

These three concentrations are a schematic for the stages in meditation, based on earlier systems, especially the five enlightenments (*abhisambodhi*) of the *Tattvasaṃgraha tantra*. Discussions of the three concentrations fea-

drawn in the centre of the maṇḍala for a healing ritual. There are a number of scriptural texts which may be sources for these Amoghapāśa practices, and there certainly does seem to have been an Amoghapāśa tantra in use by the eighth century (see Davidson 2002: 152). An Amoghapāśa tantra is listed in Pelliot tibétain 849, l.17–18: *Thabs kyi zhags pa rgyud/ A mo ga pa sha tan tra*; here the Sanskrit title may be a mistake, however, as the *Thabs kyi zhags pa pad mo’i phreng ba’i rgyud* (P.458) is not concerned with Amoghapāśa.

15 This *sādhana* appears in three versions, none of them quite complete: Pelliot tibétain 331 (single sheet), IOL Tib J 583/2 (concertina), IOL Tib J 509 & Pelliot tibétain 320 (concertina).

16 IOL Tib J 583/2, Rf4v.4:

17 P.112: 223–3–5.

ture in several Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang, with considerable consistency in the way they are described.¹⁸ In brief, the first concentration is, as we have seen, a nonconceptual state of mind. The second is a visualization of radiant light that is often linked to the quality of compassion. The third is the visualization of the Sanskrit syllable that is the ‘seed’ of the deity and *maṇḍala*. This introduces the main part of the *sādhana*.

In this case, the main part of the *sādhana* describes the visualization of the meditator as Avalokiteśvara, and the *maṇḍala* of deities surrounding him. The form of Avalokiteśvara described here is red in colour, with one face and two arms, one holding the lotus and one giving refuge. He is visualized in union with the white-robed goddess Pāṇḍaravāsini, surrounded by the deities Yamāntaka, Mahābala, Hayagrīva and Amṛtakuṇḍalī.¹⁹ The surrounding deities are generated from light-rays that emanate out of, “the *bodhicitta* from the great bliss of the nondual father and mother” (*yab yum gnyis su myed pa’i bde ba chen po’i byang cub kyi sems*).

The explicit reference to sexual intercourse and the ensuing bliss is a characteristic feature of Mahāyoga. In the treatises on Mahāyoga, these sexual practices are known by the euphemistic term ‘union’ (*sbyor ba*). Discussions of the practice of ‘union’ in Mahāyoga almost always place it with the violent rites of ‘liberation’ (*sgrol ba*) as the pair ‘union-liberation’ (*sbyor sgrol*). Thus it is interesting that this *sādhana*, containing the sexual imagery of ‘union’ is immediately followed by a *sādhana* for violent activity featuring Vajrakīlaya, the deity most closely associated with the act of violent ‘liberation’ in later Tibetan Buddhism.

(ii) *A ritual manual for the kīla*

The next text on the scroll is a short ritual manual for a violent ‘liberation’ rite employing the ritual dagger or *kīla* (Tib. *phur bu*).²⁰ After the description of the rite there are some notes on the four ‘seals’ and the three ‘purities’. A detailed commentary on this short text has previously been published by Robert Mayer and Cathy Cantwell.²¹ The ritual begins with specific instruc-

18 See IOL Tib J 437, 552, 553, 554, 716; Or.8210/S.95/7; Pelliot tibétain 42 (26–29), 283, 634.

19 The form of Avalokiteśvara in this *sādhana* is similar to the form known as ‘Jig rten mgon po’ or ‘Jig rten dbang phyug (Skt. Lokeśvara) in the later Tibetan tradition.

20 The ritual described bears some similarities to another Vajrakīlaya *sādhana* found in the Dunhuang collection: IOL Tib J 331/3. See also the Vajrakīlaya ritual described in Pelliot tibétain 349.

21 Mayer and Cantwell 1994. A survey of all of the Dunhuang Vajrakīlaya material is in Cantwell and Mayer 2008. Here they point out that the ritual found in IOL Tib J

tions for making the ritual dagger. It then briefly sketches the visualization of the dagger as a maṇḍala. The dagger is consecrated with the recitation of mantras and the ‘obstacles’ that are to be struck by the dagger are then to be visualized as being dragged and bound to the site. It is clear from this description that the objects of this violent rite are only visualized, and not present in person. The powers of compassion and wisdom are visualized and the main mantra is recited as one strikes with the dagger. The bodies of the obstacles are smashed, while their minds are simultaneously liberated.

The next section of the text is distinguished from what precedes it by a special punctuation sign of three circles between two vertical lines. These seem to be notes from an explanation on the theory behind the practice. As we will see in the next section, this text may well have been written down from an oral teaching session. The four seals (Skt. *mudrā*; Tib. *phyag rgya*) mentioned here are much the same as found in the classic tantras of the Yoga tantra class. They serve as a doctrinal basis for the visualization practice of the ritual itself. Another special punctuation mark precedes the brief explanation of the ‘three purities’. These seem to have more relevance to the practice of sexual union than the violent ritual of the *kīla*, being the purity of the male and female deities and the visualized syllables that emanated from them, a process seen in visualizations of the previous text. Thus the commentary seems to be dealing with union and liberation as a pair.

(iii) *A treatise on Mahāyoga*

The third text on the scroll is a treatise on various topics arising from Mahāyoga ritual and meditation practice:

- (i) On the thrones of the five buddha families (ll.1–3)
- (ii) An etymology of the name of the deity Vajrasattva (ll.3–8)
- (iii) The sacramental gathering (ll.9–25)
- (iv) Receiving the sacrament (ll.25–36)
- (v) Dissolving the visualization into nonconceptuality (ll.36–45)
- (vi) Union (ll.46–56)
- (vii) Liberation (ll.56–71)

Vajrasattva is introduced here as ‘the yidam deity’ (*yid dam kyi lha*), that is, the central deity of sādhana practice. The pre-eminence of Vajrasattva here is significant, for we see it again and again in the Dunhuang manuscripts,

754(b) – i.e. the one we are discussing – is very similar to a longer ritual found in IOL Tib J 331/3.

where this deity embodies all of the five buddhas of the maṇḍala.²² The function of Vajrasattva as the supreme buddha in Mahāyoga is evident, for example, in the first line of the Mahāyoga treatise IOL Tib J 508:

Homage to Śrī Vajrasattva, the vast buddha-body which comprises all of the esoteric tantras of Mahāyoga, the tantra [class] of method.²³

A key Mahāyoga text from Dunhuang, *The Questions and Answers on Vajrasattva* presents the eminence of this deity in its very title, and this is made explicit in the first two questions and answers in the text. The answer to the second question states:

When realized as unborn, all the conquerors of the three times are the same in the incomparable nature;
He is the nature of them all, the mind of the ocean of *tathāgatas*.
Because he is the genuine basis
For all the signs of enlightened body, speech and mind, he is called 'Lord'.²⁴

We also find ample evidence for the primary role of Vajrasattva in the Dunhuang *sādhana* material. Indeed, it is a striking fact that the majority of the *sādhana*s which can be categorized as Mahāyoga involve self-visualization as Vajrasattva.²⁵ We also have a painting of Vajrasattva on a ritual item in which he is clearly wearing the crown of the five buddha families, a visual implication of his role as the embodiment of all five families.²⁶

The next section of this treatise addresses one the central ritual setting of the Mahāyoga tantras, the sacramental gathering, in which tantrikas gather

22 On the defining characteristics of Mahāyoga, and its relationship to the related categories of Anuyoga and Atiyoga, see van Schaik 2008a.

23 IOL Tib J 508 r32: /rnal 'byor chen po nang pa thabs kyI rgyud kyI tan tra las kun kyI nang nas bsdus pa'i lus tshad/ dpal rdo rje sems 'pa la phyag 'tshal lo/.

24 IOL Tib J 470 l.6: dus gsum gyi rgyal ba [7] kun skye bar myed par rtogs par mnyam ba myed pa'i rang bzhin du mnyam/ /kun gyi rang bzhin bar gshegs pa/rgya mtsho'i thugs [8] sku gsung thugs kyI mtshan ma ci snyed pa'i/ /dngos po gzhi nyid du gyur pas bdag po bshad/.

25 Such *sādhana*s include IOL Tib J 331/2, 464/1, 552, 553, 554, 716/1, 754/8; Pelliot tibétain 245.

26 This item is IOL Tib J 1364. Recent analysis of this item with Raman Spectroscopy has shown that it contains the precious pigments lapis lazuli and vermilion, rare among the Dunhuang materials. This suggests that item was produced at some cost, implying wealthy lay or monastic patronage for Mahāyoga empowerments.

to imbibe sacred substances.²⁷ The necessary elements for the ritual are listed, and the attributes of those who are to engage in it. The qualities of the participants are idealized in the figures of the king Indrabhūti and his son, Śakrapuṭi, and daughter, Gomadevi. Indrabhūti and his family are involved in the origin myth of many tantras, including the *Guhyasamāja*, which became one of the most important tantras to be classified as Mahāyoga.²⁸ The following sections, on receiving the sacrament, the climax of the sacramental gathering in which the sacred substances are consumed, and on the dissolution of the visualization, seem to be part of the same practice. Ultimately, this text is, like the other two before it, a practical instruction.

The last two sections briefly discuss union and liberation, the transgressive pair that we have already encountered in the previous texts. Here they are treated rather obliquely, through multiple systems of classification, with the emphasis on the doctrinal background for the practices. Union is discussed in terms of the purified vision in which all phenomena and mental events are identical with the deities, and the deities are identical with ultimate wisdom. Liberation is placed in the context of compassion, and the accomplishments associated with liberation are stressed. The destruction of real or imagined obstacles and enemies is not mentioned here at all. Though it is always difficult to make such a judgement for textual sources alone, the practices outlined in this scroll, and the commentary upon them tend towards a metaphorical interpretation of the sexual and violent imagery of union and liberation.²⁹

(iv) *Two short medical spells*

The last two texts are just a few lines long. One is crammed onto the end of the verso of this scroll, below Tibetan text (iii), while the other is on the recto, written around the title at the end of the *Baoenjing*. Both practices begin with meditative absorption in the ‘great seal’ (Skt. *mahāmudrā*), which is in this context the visualization and total identification of oneself with the meditation deity. Then a mantra is to be recited. In the text on the recto side the mantra is recited while making a mixture in which the primary ingredient is the droppings of a male mouse (*pha byi brun*). In the text on the verso side, the last line is missing, but another animal is mentioned, this time a

27 The sacramental gathering (Skt. *gaṇacakra*) in the Indian context is discussed in Davidson 2002: 318–322.

28 On the Indrabhūti story see Davidson 2002: 242–244.

29 For an excellent discussion of whether the transgressive rituals of the tantras were ‘really’ practised, see Wedemeyer 2007.

pigeon (*bya phug ron*). This text specifies that the medicine is intended to cure cataracts (*ling tog*). It seems that the dung may have been mixed with spittle and applied to the affected area.

Both texts are clearly medical rituals. This fits well with the general observation we made in Chapter 2 – that medical texts, along with tantric and divinatory texts, are among the most common Tibetan texts found written on the verso of Chinese scrolls. So, while we can see that this part of the Daozhao manuscript is very similar to others from the Dunhuang collections, the question remains: why were these Tibetan texts written on the backs of Chinese sūtras, and who wrote them?³⁰

8.3 On Chinese scrolls with Tibetan tantric texts written on the verso

Let us first consider who might have written the Tibetan texts on this particular scroll. The Tibetan texts here represent at least three distinct handwritings, as we can see from a close analysis of the individual letter forms.

- The hand in Text 1 contains distinct forms of *ka* and *ga* that are not seen in any of the other texts.
- The hand in Text 2 contains a form of *sa* that, unlike the other three texts, is written in two strokes.
- The forms of *ka* and *ca* in Text 3 are distinct from those in the other texts.
- As Text 4 (which in fact comprises two short texts) is very brief, it is more difficult to analyse the handwriting. Still, due to the many similarities with the letter forms in Text 3, these texts may have been written by the same person.

The presence of at least three different hands suggests that this scroll was used when the need arose to record a text. Perhaps it was kept in a monastery, where it might be available for the use of several Buddhist practitioners. On the other hand, it might have been the property of a single monk who asked others to write down texts that interested him. The fact that none of these texts is represented elsewhere in the Dunhuang collections suggests

³⁰ There is one other piece of Tibetan writing on the recto of part B of the Daozhao manuscript. This is just a few syllables which are largely meaningless in Tibetan: *dkes lskel skan gal*.

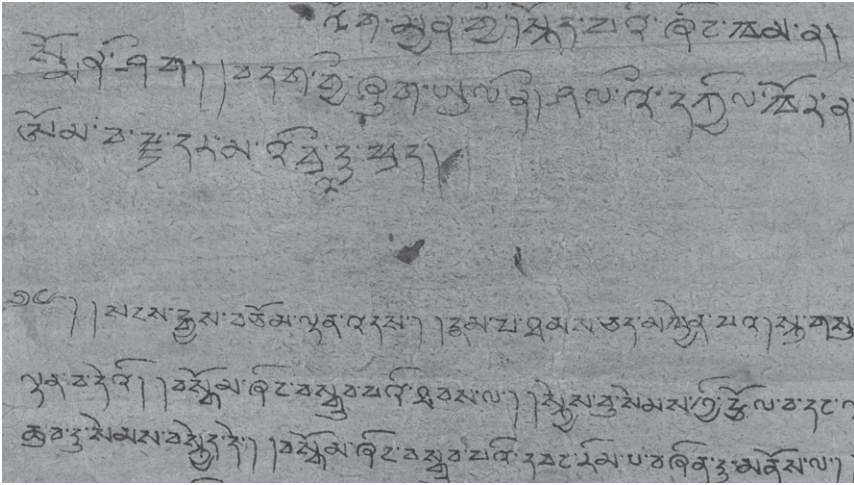


Fig.14 Tibetan notes and prayers written on the back of a Chinese almanac for the year 956 (Or.8210/S.95).

that they were not generally available, and may perhaps have been recorded from teachings given by a transient visitor to the monastery.

Thus the scroll is one of those that we discussed in Chapter 2, a Chinese scroll re-used to record Tibetan texts. It belongs to a subgroup of these scrolls in which the Tibetan texts are tantric and often written in a rather crude or hasty handwriting. Now, it is an interesting fact that many of these tantric texts contain the Mahāyoga literature that we discussed earlier as characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism in the tenth century. This kind of literature is almost entirely absent in the Chinese literature from Dunhuang. Thus it seems that, in the Dunhuang collections at least, the practices of Mahāyoga tantra circulated primarily, if not exclusively, in the Tibetan language.³¹

It is also interesting that the dateable Mahāyoga texts from Dunhuang all date from the tenth century, and no earlier. Another example is the scroll Or.8210/S.95, which contains several Tibetan prayers and tantric texts written on the verso of an almanac composed for the year 956. The scroll would have been re-used after the almanac was no longer needed (that is, from 957) and before the library cave at Dunhuang was sealed sometime in the early eleventh century. While our scroll may not have been written in Dun-

31 This was largely also true of the later Chinese dynasties that embraced transgressive tantric practices, and employed Tibetan adepts to provide tantric texts and initiations.

huang, it is very similar composition and content – a series of different texts, liturgical and tantric, written in more than one hand. In all likelihood, these Tibetan tantric texts were written around the same time, the latter half of the tenth century, which is also, of course, the probable date of our pilgrim's letters of passage.

The fact that texts like those on Manuscript B are written on the back of an existing manuscript, and the fact that they are often written in a number of hands, some of them not at all neat, suggests an opportunism at work. The reason for the reuse of the Chinese scroll is almost certainly the difficulty and expense involved in acquiring newly-made paper. The need to record a text was perhaps more important than the state of the paper on which it was written, and the quality of the writing itself. Keeping in mind that Buddhist texts were generally considered sacred items in themselves, we must conclude that other considerations overcame the need to produce a beautiful manuscript.

Considering that the Tibetan texts found on Manuscript B are not seen elsewhere, perhaps the impetus to record them came from an opportunity to receive a previously unknown textual transmission, empowerment or *sādhana*. There would be no shortage in the supply of these in areas like Dunhuang, Ganzhou and Liangzhou, which were on the route between India, Tibet and China. It seems that there was also a steady flow of Buddhist teachers passing through Dunhuang. As we have already seen, Chinese Buddhists would stay awhile as they began their pilgrimages to India, and Indians and Tibetans would stop off on their way into China. There is plenty of other evidence among the Dunhuang manuscripts of high-status Buddhist teachers travelling in both directions. The well-known Pelliot tibétain 849 is a long scroll which ends with an account of the journey through Tibet to China of an Indian teacher called Devaputra. The main part of the scroll contains thematic glossaries in Tibetan and Sanskrit which, as Matthew Kapstein has suggested, were probably compiled by a local Tibetan with the help of Devaputra himself.³² This scroll is also dated to the late tenth century.

Evidence of travelling teachers is also found among the Khotanese manuscripts. A less well-known but equally fascinating manuscript is a Sanskrit-Khotanese phrasebook containing a series of bilingual conversations (Pelliot chinois 5538). The phrasebook is written on the back of a scroll containing a Khotanese letter to Viśaśūra, the king of Khotan, from his ma-

32 Pelliot tibétain 849 was first transcribed and translated by Joseph Hackin (1924). It was recently studied again by Matthew Kapstein (2006).

ternal uncle in Shazhou (Dunhuang) dated to 970 – presumably a copy of the letter that was actually sent to Khotan.³³ As for the phrasebook, Takata writes: “This manual appears to have been compiled in consultation with an Indian monk actually on his way to India.”³⁴ We may date the phrasebook to the years between 970 and the closing of the library cave in the early eleventh century, as the letter occupies the full length of the scroll and is clearly the primary text here. Thus the phrasebook is closely contemporaneous with our manuscript.

The first conversion in the phrasebook concerns pilgrimage:

And where are you going now?
 I am going to China.
 What business do you have in China?
 I’m going to see the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.
 When are you coming back?
 I’m going to China, then I’ll return.³⁵

The earlier lines of this conversation indicate that the pilgrim being questioned is from India and has come via Khotan. His destination would have been Wutaishan, famed throughout the Buddhist world as the dwelling-place of Mañjuśrī (and, incidentally, the starting point of our pilgrim monk). The person questioning the pilgrim asks him to stay, and offers him food and perhaps to escort him with horses:

Do you have any provisions for the road?
 I do not like my provisions. I’ll go with one or two horses.³⁶

The conversation then turns to books, specifically, Buddhist books:

33 The phrasebook was translated and transcribed in Bailey 1938: 521–543. A more recent study is Kumamoto 1988. The letter was first transcribed in and translated in Bailey 1964: 17–26. Both sides of the scroll are transcribed in Bailey 1956: 121–129.

34 Takata 2000: 57.

35 Pelliot chinois 5538: (13) *īdānī kūtra gatsasī / vañāṃ kūṣṭa tsai* (14) *Caina-deśa gatsamī / Caiga-kṣīra tsū* (15) *Cain-deśaṃ kī karma astī / Caiga-kṣīra va cī kīra* (16) *Majāśrūṇī baudhasatva paśamī / Majāśrūṇī baudhasatva sāsūṃ* (17) *pūna kī kala matra agatasasī / ca bāḍa ra vā ge’sa* (18) *sarba Cīna-deśa paśamī paśtatta / Caiga-kṣīra sāsū paskāṣṭa vā gesū*.

36 Pelliot chinois 5538: (23) *pathyāpakarṇa parīpūrṇa astīathā na / padāya bisā tta ūpakarṇa īda nai* (24) *mama pathyāpakalṇa na kśamatī / ma padāya bīsā ūpakarṇa na kṣamīda* (25) *ai’ka dvaya aśvena gatsamī / śau dva aśa hamai tsū*.

Do you have any books?

I do.

Which books?

Sūtra, Abhidharma, Vinaya, Vajrayāna. Which of these books do you like?

I like Vajrayāna – teach it!

...

When shall I read it to you?

Read it to me until you leave.

Learn it.³⁷

This part of the conversation fits well with the part of our manuscript we are looking at here. Though in this case the teacher is Indian rather than Tibetan he is asked for teachings before he commences the next stage of his journey. Furthermore, it is his Vajrayāna books that the interlocutor is interested in, which accords well with the fact that so many of the texts written on the verso of Chinese scrolls are of the Vajrayāna genre. Later in the phrasebook we find the word ‘pupil’ followed by the word ‘ink-pot’ – suggesting the pupil’s copying from the traveller’s books or oral teachings.

This pilgrim returns via Ganzhou, and is questioned a little more. The conversation then moves on to the subject of a travelling Tibetan teacher:

A foreign monk has come.

Why has he come?

I don’t know.

What does he want?

It’s a Tibetan monk.

Liar! I’ll ask him.

Ask!³⁸

37 Pelliot chinois 5538: (26) pūstaka astī atha na / pūstya tta īda ā (ne) (27) pūstaka astī / īda (28) kīma pūstaka astī (29) sūtra avīdarma vīnaya vajrāyāna / sūtra avīdarma vīnīva vajrāyāna (30) aiṭṭana madyai kīma pūstaka astī / takyām hardavya tta kām pūstye āsta (31) ttava kīma pūstaka kṣamattī / tvī au kāmānai pūstye kṣamai (32) mama vajrāyāna kṣamattī śaikṣapaya / vajrāyāna kṣamai parya vā pūṣṭai ... (35) kī kala śaikṣapayamī / ca bāde ttā pūṣū (36) yava matrā ttaīṣasi ttavatta kala śaikṣapaya / kūṣṭa būra parī tsē parya vā pūṣṭai (37) śaikṣaya / sāja.

38 Pelliot chinois 5538: (93) agaduka baikṣū agatta / īṇāvaka āśīṇā (94) kīma prratya agatta / āstai keṇa ā (95) na jśanamī / na bvai (96) kīma kṣamattī / āstū-v-ai kṣamai (97) bauṭa baikṣu / ttāhaṭṭa āśī (98) mrraiṣavadi / yālaṣa (99) prraitsamī / pvaisūmai (100) praitsa / pvaie.

Many of the following lines concern some kind of strife. It seems that the Tibetan teacher may not be very well-behaved:

He is dear to many women.
He goes about a lot.
He makes love.

...

Bring a bowl! The Tibetan teacher has become ill.³⁹

It is probably unwise to try to extract a narrative from these disconnected phrases, but it is rather interesting that the Tibetan teacher is associated with making love to numerous women. As we saw earlier, the practice of 'union' in Mahāyoga, which is represented in many Tibetan texts from Dunhuang, including our manuscript and others like it, invokes sexual practice. One Tibetan Mahāyoga treatise discusses one definition of 'union' as sexual intercourse with many women, and mentions the need to avoid criticism by using coded language.⁴⁰ The phrasebook certainly suggests that by this point in time itinerant Tibetan teachers had acquired something of a reputation for this behaviour.⁴¹

Thus we have much of evidence of travelling Buddhists passing through Dunhuang and the surrounding region, as well as evidence that these Buddhists taught as they travelled, and that some of them were Tibetans. If the Tibetan tantric texts on our scroll were copied from the books, or oral teachings, of such travelling Buddhists, need the scribes have been Tibetans? As we saw in Chapter 4, the Tibetan language survived the fall of the Tibetan Empire to become a kind of *lingua franca* in the multilingual territories

39 Pelliot chinois 5538: (107) prabhūta narī prīya / pha^hrāka maṇḍī brrai (108) prabhata attasṭamuttaṣṭa satsattī / pharāka hāṣṭa vāṣṭa jsāvai (109) maithūnadarma karaiyattī ... (117) kaṣṭa bajana anīya / hamāka vā bara (118) baṭa baikṣu rāga babūva / ttāha^hṭta āśīāchanai hamye.

40 Pelliot tibétain 656, II.47–49:

Indiscriminate [union] is the greatest path of the three realms. In this case, if one is engaging in union with all women in accordance with the ritual manuals, one should avoid criticism by using *vajra* speech.

phyal ba ni khamṣ gsum dag kyi lam mchog/ na/ bud myed ci snyed yod pa rnam/ thams cad cho ga bzhin sbyor na/ rdo rje gsung kyis myi smad do zhes 'byung ba'o/. This kind behaviour is exemplified by the mythologized stories of Indian holy men known as siddhas, and also by some figures in Tibetan hagiographies, such as that of the Bhutanese yogin 'Brug pa kun legs, translated in Stein 1972.

41 Manuscript Pelliot 2782 records in much more positive terms, the positive impression made by a Tibetan teacher at Dunhuang on a visiting Khotanese Buddhist.

of Eastern Central Asia. What is more, there is no doubt that Tibetan was the language of tantric Buddhism in this region. As we have already seen, tantric Buddhism features little in the Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang, and none of the transgressive texts of Mahāyoga tantra appear in the Chinese manuscripts at all. Therefore the teachers and recipients of these texts need not have been Tibetans. In fact the writers of these Tibetan texts sometimes show a rather rudimentary grasp of Tibetan writing, suggesting that it was not their first language, and may have been learned with the specific purpose of copying and reading these texts.

The haphazard nature of these crude-looking texts may also indicate that they were written down at speed, perhaps from an oral teaching. We can further explore this possibility by looking at the kinds of errors that appear in these crudely written texts. The most familiar scribal mistake is *homeoteleuton* and *homeoarchy*, cases of the copyist missing an entire passage because the next passage begins or ends with the same syllables. The complement to such errors is *dittography*, where a passage is transcribed twice. None of these errors should appear in a transcription from an oral source. The mistakes of the ear are transformations that seem to make most sense in an oral transcription, primarily mistakes caused by *homophony*. Mistakes of homophony also appear in copies from written sources, due to the practice, common among scribes, of memorizing short segments of the text and then repeating it back to oneself as one writes it. Thus mistakes of hearing are not proof of an oral source (nor, conversely, are mistakes of sight proof that oral transmission was not involved).⁴² Nevertheless, a preponderance of mistakes of hearing, combined with the appearance that a text has been written quickly rather than carefully, seems a good basis for supposing an oral source.

42 Homophonic errors have also been observed in European medieval manuscripts (see Chaytor 1945: 19–21). Chaytor uses these errors to argue that the scribe did have a manuscript to copy from but was affected by the habit of reading aloud, a habit that was almost universal in the medieval period. But this view (prevalent since the nineteenth century) has been disputed in Carruthers 1990: 170–171. More recently, John Dagenais has set out a series of ‘registers’ to describe the way scribes change texts as they copy them. Among these are the *linguistic register* and the *register of discourse*, which in simplified terms refer to the transformative effect of the scribe’s expectations regarding the language and subject-matter of the text (Dagenais 1994: 136–137). These registers cause transformations in copies made from manuscripts similar to those found in transcriptions of oral sources. However in the manuscripts discussed below the transformations are so much more pronounced than in most Dunhuang manuscripts that the explanation of oral transmission seems worth pursuing.

Let us compare the first text on Manuscript B recto, which is perhaps written in the most accomplished hand, with the second, written in a crude hand. In Text 1, we find numerous examples of errors of sight.

- 1.15: The following syllables are crossed out thus: ~~nam-ka-mthas-klags-ge-lg~~. They appear below on the following line.
- 1.21: The syllable ~~na~~ is crossed out, and followed by *de nas*.
- 1.22: We have the following *te/ slar/ 'phags pa*. On the following line *slar* appears again, preceded by *te*.

The mistakes and corrections in Text 2 are noticeably different. In Text 1 (and 3) corrections are indicated by the standard scribal method of a single short line through the top stroke of the letter. In Text 2, on the other hand, many corrections are simply scribbled out. Here the first letter of the word is written wrongly, and the whole word needs to be written again. The fact that the correct syllable is written ‘inline’ and directly after the mistake indicates that the corrections were made in the process of writing, and not at a later stage. For example:

- 1.1: the scribbled out syllable ~~ja~~ is followed by the homophone *bya*.
- 1.27 The crossed-out ~~ea~~ is followed by *phyags*, which is also homophonic in its initial sound.

This kind of error also occurs in other texts written in this kind of handwriting. For example, in Pelliot tibétain 37 where have *bya sbyong* on f.5v and *ga sgribs* on f.6r. Note that here the scribe did not cross out the initial error. There are also errors in Text 2 which appear to have come not from the scribe mishearing, but from his expecting to hear something else. For example:

- 1.20: ~~ces brjod~~ corr. *zlas* (false expectation of a standard phrase).
- 1.22: ~~eing~~ corr. *ci* (false expectation of a similarly common particle).
- 1.33: ~~geha~~ corr. *gsum* (false expectation of another number: *gchig* [sic]?).

Note that the mantras in Text 2 do seem to have been corrected subsequently – probably the scribe/student asked the teacher to check these in particular due to their importance for the ritual. Or perhaps mistakes became apparent during the process of repeated recitation, and their users corrected the mistakes. While mistakes like these are not proof in themselves of an oral source, it is certainly not unlikely that texts like these would sometimes have been transmitted orally. Visiting teachers in particular, who would not

be travelling with a large personal library, would often be teaching from memorized texts.

In any case, these Tibetan texts on the verso of Manuscript B were part of the contemporary religious culture through which the pilgrim Daozhao travelled in the late tenth century. These tantric meditation instructions, treatises and notes from teachings represented the most popular form of tantric Buddhism at that time: Mahāyoga. Of great interest to Chinese Buddhists, but available only in the Tibetan language, these texts circulated among both Tibetans and Chinese, and were taught by travelling teachers as well as the residents of the local monasteries. Even if, as seems to be the case, Daozhao could not read Tibetan, the culture of tantric Buddhism through which he moved came to form part of the record of his pilgrimage, whether he was aware of it or not.

9 The Letters of Passage

9.1 Introduction

The Daozhao manuscript in general, and its letters of passage in particular, offer a unique window onto the historically dark period between the mid-ninth and late tenth centuries, when the areas around Lake Kokonor up to the southern Hexi corridor were ruled by Tibetan-speaking clans. The letters attest to the political power of local Tibetan rulers during this period, and to the continuing influence of Tibetan monasteries.¹ In addition, they provide first-hand evidence of the ethnical, cultural and linguistic diversity of this period, in which laymen and clerics of different backgrounds interacted on a daily basis. The Tibetan letters as they appear on this scroll are probably the monk's own copies of the originals. Fine copies of the letters would have been sent on ahead or handed to the addressee by the pilgrim as separate, sealed documents. And since the pilgrim seems to have been ignorant of Tibetan writing (hence the phonetic transcriptions in Chinese characters noted around the letters), he probably had the authors, or their scribes, write the copies on his personal scroll.

The letters are written to a conventional pattern, with the exception of Letter 2, which has no addressee and is therefore an open rather than personal letter. The personal letters begin with the name or title of the addressee, followed by a phrase literally meaning “from the presence of ...” (*zha sngas*) but effectively meaning “addressed to” Then we have the name of the author of the letter, followed by the phrase “a letter submitted by ...” (*mchid gsol ba*). This is followed by a polite enquiry regarding whether the addressee is fatigued or not. It is interesting that in our letters the enquiry about fatigue specifically addresses fatigue caused by meditation. This may

1 The use of Tibetan language alone would not be justification for writing of Tibetan rulers and monastics, but we also have the appearance of Tibetan name-elements in the authors and addressees of the letters. It should be kept in mind that when we speak of Tibetans in this context, the more general meaning of Tibetophone peoples, whose ethnic background may not be the strictly “Tibetan” people of Central Tibet, but also the Azha (*'a zha*) or Sumpa (*sum pa*) people conquered during the Tibetan imperium. On the Tibetan-speaking peoples of this region, see Rong 1990–91.

be a variation on the formula, used when the addressee is a monk.² Another apparently formulaic feature of the letters is the phrase “consider your commitments” (*thugs dam la dgongs pa*), which appears toward the end of Letters 1, 3 and 5. This may have been a standard conclusion to a request directed at a monk.³

In a classification of letters from the Dunhuang collections made by Tsuguhito Takeuchi, all of our letters fall into Type III, “personal correspondences or private letters mainly between officials and monks.”⁴ Within his Type III, Takeuchi distinguishes two types of greeting pattern; the first type, which is more numerous, contains mainly letters written under the Tibetan imperial period (that is, up to the mid-ninth century). The second pattern is found only in letters written after the imperial period (and some of these can be dated more specifically to between 920 and c.1000). It seems that our letters here correspond to Takeuchi’s second pattern, in that this pattern is characterised by an enquiry concerning fatigue. However, Takeuchi also characterises the second pattern with a seasonal greeting, which is not found in any of our letters. It may be that this seasonal greeting (which according to Takeuchi derives from Chinese practice) was not used in areas more distant from Chinese cultural influence.⁵

The letters of passage are undoubtedly an important historical source. They contain information about the Tibetan-ruled areas of Qinghai and Gansu not found anywhere else. Their date, from the late 960s, falls at the end of a historical ‘dark period’ for this region, when both Tibet and China

2 The topic of fatigue and illness caused by meditation appears in the Buddhist literature of China and Tibet. The only study of this topic that we are aware of is the dissertation of Juhn Ahn (2007), on the literature regarding ailments caused by meditation among Japanese monks.

3 The enquiry about fatigue (*snyums*), without a seasonal greeting, is found in another letter to a Tibetan monk: Pelliot 2782. This letter, which is a Tibetan letter written in the Khotanese script, appears to be from one or more Khotanese pilgrims on the way to Wutaishan. It seems to be a request to a Tibetan monastic official, who is addressed by the rank of “great master” (*slob dpon ched po*), the same rank as held by the addressee of our Tibetan letter 1, below. The letter also contains a reminder of the addressee’s religious commitments (*thugs dam*) as seen in most of the letters below. Instead of the request for safe passage found in our letters, these Khotanese pilgrims ask to be allowed to make offerings. The letter is rendered in Tibetan and translated in Bailey 1973. While the rendering into Tibetan is generally convincing, the translation here is problematic; a better translation can be made in the light of what is now known of letter-writing conventions in the tenth century.

4 Takeuchi 1990: 185.

5 On the two kinds of greeting pattern in Type III, see Takeuchi 1990: 181–185, and on the dating of letters of this type, 186–189.

were politically fragmented. The document offers no narrative as such, but is a primary source of information on regional towns, rulers, monasteries and monks. Earlier, in Chapter 3, we followed the pilgrim's route as outlined in the second letter – beginning in Wutaishan, and then travelling to Hezhou, Dantig Shan, Tsongka, Liangzhou, Ganzhou and Shazhou, with the ultimate destination being Nālandā in India. The places in which these letters were written surely overlap to some extent with this itinerary, although clear indications of the location of their authors are unfortunately lacking.⁶

The following concordance, while based on evidence discussed below, is only a hypothesis:

- Letter 1: Hezhou
- Letter 2: Tsongka
- Letter 3: Liangzhou
- Letters 4 and 5: Ganzhou
- Concluding Tibetan notes: Shazhou

The letters show that during the latter part of the tenth century local Tibetan rulers and monastic leaders could be very helpful towards Chinese pilgrims. Although our letters represent the case of a single monk, the fact that a large number of monks travelled from China to India at the same time suggests that conditions were favourable for making the journey. As we noted in Chapter 4, there is a historical report of the Tibetan ruler of Liangzhou helping a large group of pilgrims in 966. The letters in our manuscript also suggest that these local Tibetan rulers recognised a cultural difference between Chinese and Tibetan people, and referred to them as such. “Tibetans and Chinese” (*rgya bod*) are mentioned several times as a pair, and seem to have been perceived as the two main ethnic groups in the region. The Tibetans also refer to a Chinese monk like our pilgrim as a *heshang* (*hwa shang*), a loan word from Chinese which is used to refer to a Chinese monk throughout later Tibetan history as well. Thus Daozhao is distinguished in these letters from the Tibetan monks, who are known by their monastic titles or by the general terms *gelong* (*dge slong*) and *bendé* (*ban de*).

⁶ In principle, a letter of passage contains three distinct co-ordinates: (i) the place in which it is written, (ii) the place to which it is addressed and (iii) the place to which an escort is requested.

This perception of Tibetans and Chinese as two different peoples does not appear to have been an obstacle for Chinese monks hoping to enlist the aid of local Tibetan rulers in the course of their pilgrimage. According to the evidence of these letters, the shared culture of Buddhism allowed Chinese monks to seek both passage and assistance from Tibetan monks and officials. This partially explains the use of this route by the Chinese pilgrim of the Daozhao manuscript, although the route suggested in Letter 2 is not entirely straightforward, and seems to be planned around a number of temple sites, including Dantig, Hezhou and Tsongka. Thus it seems that the Tibetan sacred sites and temples of Amdo were known to certain Chinese pilgrims in the tenth century, who went out of their way to visit them in the course of their pilgrimage.

Among other new information found here is that the Tibetans referred to this geographical area, or a part of it, as Serpa (*gser pa*). The name, literally meaning ‘golden [one]’, is not attested anywhere else. Although one letter states that Serpa is a “thousand district” (*stong sde*), an administrative division of the Tibetan Empire, no documents from the Tibetan imperial period mention such a district. Possibly related is an old story of a division of the two areas of the Yarlung valley into “golden” (*gser pa*) and “turquoise” (*g.yu pa*) territories, which are said to have been in conflict at some point during the imperial period.⁷ On the other hand, the name might be derived from an imperial-period term of rank; the holders of the golden insignia could also be called “golden ones” (*gser pa*).⁸ In contemporary Tibet there is a town known, along with its surrounding region, as Serpa (*gser pa*) in Seda county, Ganzi prefecture, north-western Sichuan. It is known to scholars today for a particular Tibetan dialect spoken by the agriculturist people of the region, known as “Serpa Tibetan” which is thought to be related to the Amdo dialect.⁹ This region is well to the south of our pilgrimage route, and is thought to derive its name from the Golden River (*gser chu*), which passes through the region. The similarity between the Serpa and Amdo dialects raises the possibility that the modern Serpa people may be descended from Tibetans of the ancient Serpa district of Amdo who migrated southward at an earlier time, perhaps as refugees from the Tangut and Mongol conquests of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. However this hypothesis must remain purely speculative.

7 See Sørensen, Hazod and Gyalpo 2005: 105 n.270 and 267 n.76. There was also a Gser rigs district in the imperial period in Western Tibet (see Hazod 2009: 169).

8 See Pelliot tibétain 1089, II.71–72.

9 See Sun 2006.

As well as *stong sde*, the letters contain other examples of the persistence of official terminology from the Tibetan empire, including *chab srid*, which during the Tibetan empire referred to the imperial domain, and *zhang blon*, a high-ranking official title from the imperial period. It is likely that in the tenth century local Tibetan rulers continued to use these terms in order to evoke the prestige of the long-defunct Tibetan empire.¹⁰

The five letters of passage are written by four Tibetan officials:

- Toleu Tagsum (*To le'u stag gsum*)
- Ngog Luzhi Namka (*Ngogs lu zhi nam ka*)
- Markham Rinchen Dorjé (*Smar kham rin chen rdo rje*)
- Mog Bumdag (*Dmog 'bum bdag*)

One of the officials, Rinchen Dorjé, is also mentioned in the Chinese notes. Most elements in the officials' names are recognisably Tibetan, with the exception of the first, in which the first part of the name, Toleu, seems to be non-Tibetan, while the second part is certainly a Tibetan name. All of the letters, except Letter 2, which is an open letter or petition, are addressed to the heads of monasteries. Only one of these, Yönten Chog, is named in the letters (and is also named in the Chinese notes). They are addressed by the officials in terms of respect, and their ranks are usually stated. The ranks mentioned in the letters are as follows:

- Great Master (*slobs dpon chen po*). The Tibetan term is a translation of the Sanskrit *mahācārya*. The usual Chinese equivalent for *ācarya* is *shi* 師.
- Great Teacher (*ston chen po*). This appears to be a general honorific rather than a specific rank as such. In Chinese the term *dashi* 大師 fulfils the same function.
- Great Elder (*gnas brtan chen po*). The Tibetan term *gnas brtan* translates the Sanskrit *mahāsthavira*. This was not a common monastic rank in Tibet, but the Tibetan word may also translate a Chinese monastic official title: *shangzuo* 上座.
- Great Monk (*ban de chen po*). The Tibetan *ban de* is a rough transliteration of the Sanskrit *mahābhadanta*. 'Great Monk' is said to have been a rank conferred on favoured monk-ministers during the reigns of the Tibetan kings Tri Song Detsen (r.789–c.800) and Tri Tsug Det-

10 On administrative districts in the Tibetan empire see Uray and Uebach 1994, Takeuchi 1994 and Iwao 2007; on *zhang blon* see Dotson 2004.

sen (r. 815–841).¹¹ Equivalent Chinese terms include *dade* 大德 and *potantuo* 婆檀陀.

- Abbot (*mkhan po*). This translates the Sanskrit *upādhyāya*. The equivalent Chinese term *heshang* 和尚 came to denote any monk, but here it seems closer to the Tibetan (and also Japanese) meaning of a monastic rank, usually translated into English as ‘abbot’. In Letter 1, this rank seems to be inferior to that of Great Master.

In the Tibetan notes following the final letter we find the Chinese monastic rank of Sengtong (*sing tung* = *sengtong* 僧統), the highest title for a Buddhist official in Guiyijun-ruled Dunhuang.¹² The fact that the letters were written by officials, but addressed to monastics, suggests that the monastics were expected to provide support for pilgrims, but that the duty of writing of letters of passage fell to secular officials. However, divisions between these roles seem to have been blurring at this time. In at least one example, that of Mog Bumdag (Letters 4 and 5), we seem to have an official who also presents himself as a member of the Buddhist clergy. Iwasaki has discussed the evidence in the Song Annals that by the early eleventh century there were Tibetan tribes in this area ruled by monks.¹³ Our document seems to confirm this picture.

The Chinese notes begin with a few lines in the Chinese language. A little further down there is a *dhāraṇī* transcribed from the Sanskrit. Otherwise the majority of the Chinese notes are transcriptions of Tibetan names. We have consulted the names found in other Central Asian manuscripts from the ninth and tenth centuries, as well as the Chinese historical sources. However, since these are personal notes, probably written by the pilgrim monk himself, we should not expect them to match perfectly any phonetic system found in such sources. In our phonetic reconstruction of these Chinese notes we have used (i) Takata’s (1988) reconstructions of the Hexi dialect, and (ii) Baxter’s (2000) reconstructions of Middle Chinese.¹⁴ It is interesting to note that, where we can be fairly certain of the Tibetan, the

11 *Tshig mdzod chen mo* II.1813.

12 This Chinese rank is rendered in a Tibetan manuscript (SI O/141) as *sing thong*. See Takeuchi 2004: 120.

13 Iwasaki 1993: 18–19.

14 Although Baxter’s reconstructions strictly speaking originate from the Sui dynasty, as a comprehensive system we still find them useful for transcribing the Chinese notes on our manuscript. In our transcription below we mark Takata’s reconstruction of the Hexi dialect, generally the first in sequence, with the letters “HX,” and Baxter’s Middle Chinese as “MC.”

latter, Middle Chinese pronunciation, seems to be closer, which confirms our hypothesis that these notes were written by the pilgrim, and reflect his own linguistic background from somewhere in China proper, rather than the Hexi region. At the same time, since we cannot ascertain his place of origin and pinpoint his native dialect, the transcriptions and interpretations given here remain provisional, and are offered in the knowledge that they will be revised and improved in the future.

9.2 Transcription, translation and notes

Note on transcriptions:

{ } = uncertain reading

[] = transcribed by Thomas but now illegible

< > = deletion

++ = addition

□ = unreadable Chinese character

9.2.1 *Chinese Notes 1*¹⁵

斬離封部人黃沙，為億(意)真如進道，注前程多有狼虎，難累生，須到法王家。

Huang Sha (HX: x^wɔ~ ʂa; MC: hwang sræ), a man from the Zhanlifeng (HX: tsiâm-li-fun; MC: tsremX lje pjowng) clan (zone?), is advancing on the road because he wishes to acquire thusness (Skt. *tathatā*; Tib. *de bzhin nyid*). The path ahead has many wolves and tigers, and it is difficult to sustain one's life. It is necessary [for him] to reach the home of the dharma king.

宗是布干王垵¹⁶里麟軫都離知兒樂軫諸龍

XH: tsuŋ ʃi pu kiän ji^wɔ~ ɿäk li liän tsiäm tu li tsi zi lâk tsiäm tsy liuŋ

MC: tsowng dzyeX puH kan hjwang ywek liX lin tsyinX tu lje trje nye lak tsyinX tsyo ljowng

15 Chinese characters or their transcription values in parantheses indicate an alternate or improved reading for the preceding character or phrase. Thus 億(意) in the first line of our transcription means that even though the manuscript in this place has the character 億 ('hundred million'), we believe that it was used to write the word usually written as 意 ('intention, will').

16 The character 垵 is rare and is an unlikely candidate to be used for a transcription of foreign names. Although it is clearly visible in the manuscript, it is more likely that it is instead a variant form of another character, perhaps 沒 or 段.

佛是丘南兒七(亡?)寶俱

XH: fər ʃi k'əu ˈdām ʒi ts'iar (ᵐbo~) pâu kiu

MC: bjut dzyeX khjuw nom nye tshit (mjang?) pawX kju

The first two lines, except for the first few characters, are in Chinese and therefore we provide a translation rather than a phonetic reconstruction. However, the text is difficult and the translation here is tentative. The name Huang Sha is unlikely to be a monastic name and we have transcribed it as if it consisted of the Chinese surname Huang and the given name Sha. It is possible, however, that it is a transliteration of a Tibetan name and should therefore be written together as Huangsha. In the context of the Hexi Corridor and the pilgrimage movement to the West, it is also difficult to ignore that this name literally means “yellow sand,” a phrase that occurs in historical material related to this region.¹⁷

Regardless of the identity of Huang Sha, it is clear that he was travelling with a specific religious purpose in mind, namely, “to acquire thusness.” The wild beasts along the way and the hardships of the journey echo the description of the deserts around Dunhuang in the narratives of Faxian and Xuanzang. For example, the words “The path ahead has many wolves and tigers, and it is difficult to sustain one’s life” 多有狼虎,難累生 are certainly reminiscent of the description of Faxian’s difficulties in traversing a dense forest where “there are many lions, tigers and wolves, and one cannot travel recklessly” 多師子虎狼,不可妄行 (T.51.2085: 0864a). This portion of the text concludes with the statement that the pilgrim “has to reach the home of the dharma king.” The title “dharma king” is common in Tibetan (*chos rgyal*). Though most usually applied to the Buddhist kings of the Tibetan imperial period, it was also used by other, later, rulers who supported Buddhism; one possibility is the unnamed ruler of Liangzhou who helped a group of pilgrims in the year 966 (see Chapter 4).

The remaining Chinese characters are clearly a transliteration of a Tibetan name. This may be the name of the “dharma king” mentioned above. The characters 麟軫都離知 (MC: lin tsyinX tu lje trje) may represent the Tibetan name Rinchen Dorjé (*rin chen rdo rje*), the author of Letter 3. As we have already mentioned, this letter was probably written in Liangzhou.

17 For example, in the chapter on the Tuyuhun Kingdom, the *Beishi* 北史 (“Tuyuhun zhuan” 吐谷渾傳) etymologizes the name of the Shazhou the following way: “There is yellow sand in this region, without any vegetation for hundreds of *li* around. This is why it is called Shazhou (i.e. province of sand).” 部內有黃沙, 周迴數百里, 不生草木, 因號沙州.

Thus it is interesting that we also find here the Chinese characters (諸龍 MC: tsyo lɲowng – perhaps representing Tibetan *chos lung*). These characters are very similar to *zhe long* (者龍 MC: tsyæX lɲowng), the name of a military alliance of thirteen Tibetan clans described in the Song Annals as dominating the Liangzhou area.¹⁸

The second name here includes the element 南兒 (MC: nom nye) which reappears many times in the Chinese notes below. It may be *Nam rje*, which is found in a Tibetan manuscript from Mazar Tagh.¹⁹

There follows another name:

先不降	用檀畜記	是賽
HX: siän fu ²⁰ kaŋ	jiuŋ tân ts'iuŋ ki	ši sai
MC: sen pjuw kæwngH	yowngH dan xjuwk kiH	dzyeX sojH

It seems that here we have the name of Yönten Chog (*yon tan mchog*), who appears as the addressee in the Tibetan Letter 1. His monastic seat is not mentioned in that letter but may be specified here as 先不降 (MC: sen pjuw kæwngH) – the last character probably representing Tibetan *khang*. To the right of the last two characters are three erased characters, the first two of which can still be made out as the name **Nam rje* 南兒 (MC: nom nye). Then we have a line of erased characters, of which we can only read three:

□□□□□□□南□是□□□檀
HX: [...] "dâm [...] ši [...] tân
MC: [...] nom [...] dzyeX [...] dan

Without being able to read the line, it is hard to understand why it was deleted. After this, as the top of a new line, we find three characters in a different hand:

時吉寶
HX: ši kiær pâu
MC: dzyi kjit pawX

18 *Songshi*: 14157. See also Dunnell 1996: 172–173.

19 E.g. Or.15000/95. Possible matches in names from other manuscripts: Gnam ched (Or.8212/173) and Nam shi (Or.15000/157).

20 Note that *fu* can also be read as *pær* or *sær*.

These three characters are written in larger script by someone who was much more experienced in writing Chinese than the rest of the manuscript. It is possible that they are not part of the letters of passage but were added later by Chinese monks who filed the manuscript in Dunhuang. If this hypothesis is true then they, of course, should not be treated as a transcription of a Tibetan word but as part of some sort of Chinese nomenclature.

9.2.2 Tibetan Letter 1

1 @// sloba dpon chen po yon tan mchog bzhugs pi²¹ zha snga nas / /to le'u +stag gsum+ gis snying gsol ba/ /zha 'bring

2 ['dab na]s 'drul ba la mchid gis rmas na/ /dgongs pas sku mnyel ma lags pa/ mnga' tang la 'grib pa myi mnga'

3 [bar khums/ /] mchid yi ge las gus pas snyun gsol zhing mchis/ bkas rma bar ci gngang/

4 @// [na] gsol ba'/ rgya hwa shang de spyang ngar <brmangs> pa'i don ni/ hwa shang de rgya gar

5 yul du [shag kya] thub pa'i gdung len du mchi lags na/ phar leng cur mkhan po gshegs pa lags

6 na thugs khral cher myi mdzad kha ma mchis/ nyid myi gshegs na zha 'bring gcig gis hwa shang de leng chur

7 phyin bar myi skye[l] kha ma mchis/ thugs dam la dgongs par gsol/ zhib tu hwa shang kho bdag la spring//

8 @//slad na mkhen po bzhugs pi zha snga nas/ mchid phrin de dang mjal ba lags na/ ['] / do cig bzo

9 de bgyid pa' lags na/ 'drul ba la bka' spring nges pa cig myi brdzang du myi rung/

10 bzo bgyid par gyur na dbyar lo la 'grub par bgyi//

This is addressed to the residence of the great master Yönten Chog: To-leu Tagsum inquires regarding your health. According to what you said in the letter brought by your servant, your body is not fatigued by your meditation, and your authority is undiminished. In this letter I enquire devotedly about your health, and ask how I may fulfil your commands.

²¹In terms of phonology, it is interesting to note here the variant *pi* for *pa'i*. This is also seen in other Dunhuang manuscripts, and it may be a scribal contraction. However, it also reflects the pronunciation of the contemporary and Amdo dialect, and may be a local variant specific to this region.

May I ask a favour regarding a Chinese monk who has been in my presence? The monk wishes to go to India to see the relics of Śākyamuni. If the abbot were to travel across to Liangzhou [with the monk] it would not be such a great burden. If [the abbot] cannot travel there, then a servant could accompany the monk. I beg you to consider your commitments. The monk will give you more detailed information.

Furthermore, this is addressed to the residence of the abbot: if this letter comes to you, and you do comply with this request immediately, it would be improper not to send back a letter of confirmation. If you have complied with this request, please do so by summer this year.

This letter is written upside-down in relation to all of the other letters. The writer is a Toleu Tagsum, who appears to be a local official, perhaps of military rank.²² He asks for an escort for the pilgrim monk to take him as far as Liangzhou.²³ According to the itinerary set out in Letter 2 below, the stop preceding Liangzhou was Tsongka. So it may well be that this letter originates from Tsongka, which, as we saw in Chapter 4, was one of the major strongholds of Tibetan power in the area from the later imperial period through to the Tangut conquests of the eleventh century.

The addressee, Yönten Chog, is addressed as a “great master” (*slob dpon chen po*), a high monastic rank. His name is a purely Tibetan religious name, though not a common one. It is possible that this Yönten Chog is the same figure as a certain Dan Yönten Chog (*Dan yon tan mchog*) mentioned in a number of later histories.

This Dan Yönten Chog appears in a thirteenth-century history as a link in the transmission of the Mañjuśrī sādhana. Another dateable early figure in this lineage is Nub Sangyé Yeshé (*Gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes*), one of the most important figures in the Tibetan era of fragmentation, who was active in the latter ninth and early tenth century. The Mañjuśrī lineage passes from Sangyé Yeshé to his four close disciples, and from them to another figure, and from him to Dan Yönten Chog. Estimating 25 years for each step in the lineage, this would place Dan Yönten Chog in the latter tenth

22 Thomas (1951: 185–186) suggests that this name indicates a military role, as it does in other contexts. Note that a Blon Stag sum appears in the contract Pelliot tibétain 1094 (Takeuchi 1995: text 1).

23 On the identification of Leng cu with Liangzhou, see the notes to the next letter.

century, aligning him perfectly with the Yönten Chog mentioned here in the letter.²⁴

As for the first part of this name, “Dan” is not a Tibetan clan name, but could represent the fact that this figure was associated with Dantig. If this letter was written at the first stage in the Tibetan part of the monk’s itinerary, then it could well have been written from Hezhou, and addressed to the next stage in the itinerary, which is Dantig. So the Yönten Chog addressed in this letter could have been based at Dantig.

The second part of the letter is addressed to the abbot (*mkhan po*) who has been suggested as a possible escort for the pilgrim. With little in the way of politeness, Toleu requests a letter of confirmation from the abbot once his duty as escort has been successfully carried out. The difference in tone indicates that the monastery’s preceptor (*slob dpon*) is of rank demanding more respect than the abbot (*mkhan po*).

9.2.3 Chinese Notes 2

Following Letter 1 there is yet another erased line which cannot be read anymore. This is followed by an additional list of names:

照龍半軫亡妣

HX: tsiäü liuṇ pam tsiäm ʰbo~ p’i

MC: tsyewH ljowng panH tsyinX mjang pjijX

和尚單鉢單

HX: xʷäi śio~ tân pâṇ tân

MC: hwa dzyangH tan pat tan

南兒單

HX: ʰdäm ži tân

MC: nom nye tan

居憐軫

HX: ky liän tsiäm

MC: kjo len tsyinX

This is a list of monks (和尚) who seem to be led by 照龍半軫亡妣 (MC: tsyewH ljowng panH tsyinX mjang pjijX). This Tibetan name contains the

24 *Chos ’byung me tog snying po*: 488. Some other, later histories make Dan Yönten Chog a direct student of Nub Sangyé Yeshe.

element 照龍 (MC: tsyewH ljowng, perhaps representing the Tibetan name *chos lung* again). As for the second part of the name 半, leaders with this clan name appear in the Song Annals at the beginning of the eleventh century. Luciano Petech suggests that this may be a transcription of the Tibetan name 'Phan.²⁵ Certainly this name is found in many ninth century Central Asian manuscripts.²⁶ In the third name we see once again the element *Nam rje 南兒 (MC: nom nye) and in the fourth name the character 居 (MC: kjo) is possibly the Tibetan clan name *Khu*.

These names are followed by three characters in a different, much more elegant hand, upside down, giving the name of the Longxing monastery (which probably also appears in the Tibetan Letters 4 and 5):

龍興寺

Longxing monastery

Rong Xinjiang (1991: 956) suggests that the Longxing monastery was the place where our monk must have stayed during the time he remained in Shazhou. Since having come this far, his letters of passage for the Hexi corridor would have lost their use and, Rong argues, he must have left them behind.²⁷

This is followed by a transcription of a Sanskrit *dhāraṇī*, which we have not been able to identify. It obviously ends, however, with the word *svāhā* 娑縛訶.

鼻帝鼻口娑里帝鼻哥羅帝哥囉娑里
 坡里帝奕囉古汲坎大口寧帝娑知多既阿秘既汲哥既
 鼻哥口帝鼻囉波鼻哥口俞帝娑縛訶

This is followed by more names, the first two of which are introduced as the head monks of the monastery.

²⁵ Petech 1983: 174–175. Dunnell 1994: 172.

²⁶ As well as 'Phan, we also find 'Pan and Pan.

²⁷ Rong was probably only working on the basis of the catalogue descriptions of this manuscript, still unpublished at the time. Perhaps because of this he did not connect the Chinese notes between the letters with the dated commemoration of the Gantong monastery. Accordingly, he conjectured that the letters dated to late eighth to mid-ninth centuries.

淨居寺主僧 法畜散, 山主 張畜時

Fa Chusan (HX: fäp ts'uk sân; MC: pjop xjuwk sanH), leading monk of the Jingju monastery; Zhang Chushi (HX: tsio~ ts'uk ši; MC: trjang xjuwk dzyi), abbot [of the Jingju monastery]

杜溫龍婆

HX: Tu ?wən liuŋ pâ

MC: duX ?won ljowng ba

兒樂□²⁸

zi lâk [...]

nye lak [...]

Unfortunately only the first character *jing* 淨 (“pure”) of the name of the monastery is readable with confidence. One would be tempted to read the second character as *tu* 土 (“land”) to give us “Pure Land monastery” but what is visible of the second character makes it clear that it is not the character 土. Having looked through the possible combinations of attested monastery names starting with the character 淨, the most likely option is Jingjusi 淨居寺 (Monastery of Pure Dwelling), which is known to have existed in other parts of China.²⁹ This reading, however, is tentative, and it is unclear whether a monastery by this name existed in Western China. This line mentions two monastic officials: Fa Chusan and Zhang Chushi, both of which seem to have a mixture of Chinese surnames and Tibetan given names. These two monks have different titles. The first is the leading monk 主僧 of the monastery, whereas the second is the abbot 山主, literally ‘the head of the mountain’ or rather ‘head of the monastery’. It would be interesting to know what the difference between these two titles was, since both of them seem to designate the person occupying the highest position in the monastery.

The second line contains another name, possible starting with the Chinese surname Du 杜. Lower in the same line we find another name beginning with 兒樂 (MC: nye lak), which already occurred earlier in the third line (second in the transcription) on this side of the manuscript, after a name which we tentatively identified as Rinchen Dorjé (*Rin chen rdo rje*), the author of Letter 3.

There follows a line of erased characters, and then more names:

28 This character is visible yet because of the cursive handwriting we cannot identify it. It appears similar to the characters 烏, 鳥 or 寫, neither of which seems to be a perfect match.

29 Li Fangmin’s (2006) directory of Buddhist monasteries from the Tang and Five Dynasties periods lists three different Jingju monasteries, none of which were located in this part of China and thus seem to have no relevance to our manuscript.

半及半龍南兒單覓依麟軫

HX: pam kiəp pam liuŋ ˈdām ʒi t̪ân ˈbiäk ɿ liən t̪siəm

MC: panH gip panH ljoŋwng nom nye tan mek ʔjiŋ in t̪sinX

高山卒呂挽南兒單畜麵亡寶

HX: kâu ʂan tsʰit – – ˈdām ʒi t̪ân t̪sʰiuk ˈbiän ˈbɔ̃~ pâu

MC: kaw sɾen tswit ljoX mjoŋX nom nye tan xjuwk ˈmenH mjang pawX

Many of the name elements found above appear here once again, including the clan name 半 (*Phan) and the personal name *Nam rje (南兒). The element 亡寶 (MC: mjang pawX) may represent the Tibetan *dbang po*, which is both the title of a ruler and a common element of personal names.

9.2.4 Tibetan Letter 2

1 @//:yon dag ngogs lu zhi nam kas gsol ba rgya yul nas rgya 'i hwa
shang rka thub chen po

2 mkhas pa ched po btsun chen gong na myed pa gcig rgya gar yul na
dpal shag kya

3 thub pa'i yul na thong du mchi ba lags so /lam ni 'go de shan nas
mchis nas /

4 ga cu gser khang g.yu gang lam byung de nas ri dan tig shan du by-
ung de nes[=nas] tsong ka

5 gser kang g.yu khang du byung de nas le{ng} cu <m>khab du 'byung
de nas kam <> cu mkhar

6 du 'byung ngo /de nas sha cu {rtsags 'byung ngo} /de nas rgya gar
yul na /dpal shi lin na len tra

7 {slob pa ched po} dang bya rgod {phags ri} la bcom ldan 'das shag
kya thub pa'i {zha} ...

8 mthong du {mchi bar} nges so /'di man chad rgya bod byin gyis
kyang gar ... {chad} ...

9 ... {s..ching..g} dang /su skyal rim par ba gyi+s pa lags so /de yan
chad du yod ...

10 byin gyi [brlabs] {kyang} /'di gar bab par mchod nas su bgyi ba
dang {bsu} skyel [rim par] ...

11 mdzo{ng} ... la gnod pa byed pa 'am dge 'i bar cad byed pa gcig bod
{na} rgya ga[r]

12 gnyis kyang ...[thams] cad kyi phyogs bcu nas sngag kyi thun phab
la rlung bskur

13 la gtang ngo// ... //de ltar ni nam kas spring ngo /su yang ma gtse
cig // //

This is a petition from the patron Ngog Luzhi Namka. A Chinese monk from China who is unequalled as a great ascetic, a great scholar and a great upholder of virtue is going to India to see the sites of Śākyamuni. His route is as follows. Proceeding from Wutaishan he arrived at the gold and turquoise halls of Hezhou; after that he arrived at the mountain of Dantig Shan; after that he arrived at the gold and turquoise halls of Tsongka; after that he will arrive at the palace of Liangzhou; after that he will arrive at the castle of Ganzhou; after that he will arrive at Shazhou. After that he will certainly go to see the great teachers of Śrī Nālandā and the relics of Śākyamuni at the Vulture's Peak in India.

Up to this point [in the monk's journey] both Chinese and Tibetans have [treated him] honourably... and conducted him stage by stage. From this point onward, ... [he should be treated] honourably. Treat him as an object of veneration and conduct him stage by stage. [If] anyone harms him or obstructs his virtuous activities, be they Chinese or Tibetan, ... the news will be carried away on the winds to the ten directions. This is Namka's message: let nobody hurt [the monk]!

This is the only letter on the scroll without an addressee, and it therefore lacks the standard polite preamble. Thus it should probably be considered an open letter or petition. The author of the letter has a Tibetan clan name, followed by a non-Tibetan, perhaps Chinese name (*lu zhi*) and a Tibetan name (*nam ka*, “sky”). The letter extols the virtue of the monk, then details his route. The beginning and end points of the journey (Wutaishan and Nālandā) are of course a great distance from each other, but the intermediate points in the journey are all within a relatively limited area. The tense of the verb (')*byung*, meaning in this context “to arrive”, suggests that the pilgrim has already visited Hezhou, Dantig Shan and Tsongka, and is now departing for Liangzhou, after which he will visit Ganzhou and Shazhou. We can deduce that this letter was most likely written either in Tsongka or between Tsongka and Liangzhou. As it complements Letter 1 above, it may have originated from the same point in the pilgrim's journey.

Most of the place names here are self-explanatory, and have been discussed in Chapter 2 above. Some of the Tibetan transliterations do need a little further comment. 'Go de shan represents the pronunciation of Wutaishan at this time. Ga cu is a Tibetan transcription of the name Hezhou, as R.A. Stein has shown.³⁰ The “gold and turquoise temple” seems to be a standard way of referring to a temple, rather than a specific name, as the

³⁰ See Stein 1961: 33, 76.

same name is used for the temples of Hezhou and Tsongka. As we saw in Chapter 4, temples were built with turquoise tiles and with gold-painted pillars and beams. Several temples in Central and Western Tibet had the name “golden temple” (*gser khang*), including temples in the Zhalu and Tabo monasteries. More importantly, there is a Gser khang monastery near the town of Jentsa (Jionza), just to the southwest of Dantig. Although not located near the ancient sites of either Hezhou or Tsongka, it is evidence of the use of the name “golden temple” in the region. In a list of monasteries established during the reign of the Tibetan emperor Tri Tsug Detsen (r.815–841) we also find a “Great Turquoise” (*g.yu che*) monastery founded in the Hexi province of Guazhou.³¹ Another manuscript contains prayers for the consecration of the famous “Turquoise Grove” (*g.yu tshal*) monastery, founded by the same emperor.³²

As for the Tibetan name *Leng cu*, there has been some dispute about which city it refers to. The name is seen in the eighth century Zhöl pillar inscription as a transliteration of a Chinese place name. According to Hugh Richardson (1985: 1) it is there a transcription of Liangzhou 涼州. This conclusion was disputed by Li and Coblin (1987: 170–1) who argued on linguistic grounds that it must have been a transcription of Lingzhou 靈州. However, the name also appears in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, where it clearly does refer to Liangzhou.³³ Whatever the case may be for the Zhöl pillar inscription, it is clear from the position of the place name *Leng cu* in this itinerary that it should refer to Liangzhou. Liangzhou can be visited on a route between Tsongka and Ganzhou, but if *Leng cu* was Lingzhou it would entail the monk retracing his own route over several hundred miles. We also have the evidence of the stele inscription in part C of the Daozhao manuscript, which is from the Gantong monastery in Liangzhou, a clear indication that this city was visited by the pilgrim. Finally, Géza Uray also argued for the identification of *Leng cu* with Liangzhou based on this very manuscript, along with a number of other sources.³⁴ In our letter, after the name *Leng cu* we have the word *khab*. This term appears in several Dunhuang documents,

31 Uebach 1990: 396 (From the *chos 'byung* of Lde'u jo sras).

32 Pelliot tibétain 16 and IOL Tib J 751. See Kapstein 2004.

33 See Dotson 2009: 130, and the discussion in Rong 1990–91: 261–264.

34 See Uray 1991: 215–219. Other manuscripts containing the name *Leng cu* mentioned by Uray are IOL Tib J 134 (Ch.73.iv.14) and Pelliot tibétain 1082. Also the *Old Tibetan Annals* II has *Leng cu khar tsan* (Or.8212/187, l.33) being attacked by the Tibetan army in the year 758. The name *khar tsan* appears as an administrative district called *khrom* in IOL Tib J 751 (38v.2) and Pelliot tibétain 1089 (recto l.12, 30, 35).

where it sometimes seems to signify a place such as a castle or palace.³⁵ In a similar way, the next town, Ganzhou (*kam cu*) is characterized as a *mkhar* (“castle” or “fort”). The latter is still found as a name element in several towns in the region; for example, Dowi Khar (*rdo sbis mkhar*).

Shi lin na len tra is of course Śrī Nālandā. This is the great monastic university located in the (modern) Patna district of Bihar, the destination of Chinese pilgrims from Faxian onwards. Note that the transcription of Śrī (*shi lin*) is similar to Chinese transcriptions (e.g. 室利) while the transcription of Nālandā (*na len tra*) is the same as found in later Tibetan transcriptions. In the *Dbā' bzhed*, for example, we find *Shi le / Shri ri Na len tra*.³⁶ The writer of this letter has added, redundantly, the Tibetan word *dpal* at the beginning which translates Sanskrit *śrī*.

Between this letter and the following there is a worn line of Chinese characters, which are mostly illegible. This line has not been smudged with black ink as the other erased ones but has simply been worn out to the point of illegibility. It is possible to discern that the first two characters are 照龍 (MC: tsyewH ljowng), which occur several times in this manuscript.

照龍□□□□□□□□□□便□□□□□□

HX: tśiäu liuŋ [...]

piän [...]

MC: tsyewH ljowng [...]

bjienH [...]

This line is followed by the third Tibetan letter:

9.2.5 Tibetan Letter 3

1 st[o]n chen po'i zha sngar// //

2 smar kham rin chen rdo rjes mchid gsol ba/

3 dgongs pa zab mo'i sku ma nye{1} n... dang/ chos {nyid} kyi dgongs
{la} {myi} la bar myi mnga'

4 rin po che sku la snyun bzhes sam ma bzhes// {yi ge las snyun gsol
zhing mchis}

5 slad na rgya yul nas hwa shang btsun ba {mkhas pa} la bul du gyis ...
// ... {rgya gar} nas

35 See for example IOL Tib J 1368, ll.39 and 48. Thomas (1951: 12) translates *khab* as “mansion.” See also Pelliot tibétain 1040, l.6 and Pelliot tibétain 1285, ll.103, 122, 123, 124, 129, 130, 146. This is not the same as the administrative term of the Tibetan empire, *khab so*, which seems to indicate a treasury or officials responsible for the treasury (see Li and Coblin 1987: 125).

36 Pasang and Diemberger 2000: 39 (5b) and 90 (25a).

6 rgya gar gi yul du /bcom {ldan 'das} shag kya thub pa {gdung la
 phyag} tshal du mchi
 7 ba 'di /'sprin chen gtsug lag khang du myi bskyal du myi rung //
 thugs dam la dgongs//

This is addressed to the great teacher: a petitioning letter from Markham Rinchen Dorjé. Please write a letter to say whether your body has been weakened by your profound meditation and whether, even though there are no obstacles to your meditation on the nature of reality (dharmatā), your precious self may have fallen ill.

On to other matters. A Chinese monk who is learned and an upholder of virtue is travelling from China to India to pay homage to the relics of Śākyamuni. It would be improper not to escort him to the Dayun monastery. Consider your commitments.

This brief letter is addressed to an unnamed monastic with the title “great teacher” (*ston chen po*). This letter, like the next two, uses the phrase *mchid gsol ba*, indicating a letter to a person of superior rank.³⁷ This is interesting, since here as in the next two letters, the sender is a lay person, presumably an official, and the addressee is a monastic. The addressee is also addressed with the epithet Rinpoché (*rin po che*), one of the earliest occurrences of this honorific title for a respected Buddhist monk.³⁸ Here the sender is a Markham Rinchen Dorje; the first part of his name indicates that he is a Tibetan from Markham (*smar khams*), an area of eastern Tibet. The second part of his name, Rinchen Dorjé, also appears in the Chinese writing on this side of the scroll.

The handwriting of this letter is a fluid cursive style with similarities to the later *khyug* style. This style of writing is not seen in the cursive handwriting of Tibetan documents from the Dunhuang area. This suggests that it may have been a recent development among the Tibetan officials which had not been widely adopted, at least before the eleventh century, by the writers of Tibetan documents in Amdo. This could help us to date the emergence of the *khyug* style to this very period.

37 Takeuchi 1990: 183.

38 Another occurrence of this title in the Dunhuang manuscripts is the letter found in Pelliot tibétain 1284 (discussed in Takeuchi 1990). As Iwasaki Tsutomu has pointed out, we also find this title occurring in the early eleventh century in Chinese transcription in the *Song huiyao* (Iwasaki 1993: 19), as the name of a monk bringing tributes from the Liangzhou area to the Song court.

At this point in his journey the pilgrim may have reached the destination mentioned in Letter 1 and implied in Letter 2: Liangzhou. This is where he took a copy of the stele inscription at the Gantong monastery that comprises Manuscript C. Thus this letter may be written by a Tibetan official in Liangzhou. The letter is asking for an escort to the Dayun monastery 大雲寺 (*sprin chen*). In the reign of Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–705), a monastery with the name of Dayun (the Chinese translation of Mahāmegha, ‘great cloud’) was established in every prefecture in the Empress’s honour. This fact makes the location of the Dayun monastery mentioned in this letter difficult to determine, but it might refer to the monastery of that name in Ganzhou, the next city on the pilgrim’s itinerary.

9.2.6 Chinese Notes 3

先鉢諸口眾³⁹亡寶

HX: siän pār tśy [...] tśiun [...] ^mbɔ~ pâu

MC: sen pat tsyo [...] tsyuwngH [...] mjang pawX

The following characters appear lower on the same line as the previous line and are almost completely invisible, possibly as a result of having been erased. In a similar manner, the line following that on the manuscript is also barely visible.

照龍々婆畜口南口部

HX: tśiäu liuŋ liuŋ pâ tś‘iuk [...] ⁿdâm [...] pu

MC: tsyewH ljowng ljowng ba xjuwk [...] nom [...] buX

照龍々婆畜卒論卒論 (rest of line worn off)

HX: tśiäu liuŋ liuŋ pâ tś‘iuk ts^wit l^wən ts^wit l^wən ...

MC: tsyewH ljowng ljowng ba xjuwk tswit lwonH tswit lwonH ...

口宗呵里足樂可疑卒論本 (rest of line worn off)

HX: [...] tsuŋ k‘â li tsiok lâk k‘â ŋgi ts^wit l^wən pən ...

MC: [...] tsowng xa liX tsjowk lak khaX ŋgi tswit lwonH pwonX ...

The name 照龍 (Tib. *chos lung*) appears here as the first part of the second and third names. The last line refers to a monastery (*gtsug lag khang*) at Tsongka (*tsong ka’i*). Here and the line above we also find the name of a rank, perhaps *mchod blon*, an official responsible for religious offerings.

39 Two small illegible chars inserted after 眾: 未念?

9.2.7 Tibetan Letters 4, 5

- 1 {lung} song lha gang gi gnas brtan ched po ban de ched po'i zha sngar//
- 2 dmog 'bum bdag gis mchid gsol pa'
- 3 snga slad 'drul ba'i ... mchid kyis rmas {nad} ... {ma nges pas} lags
pa na dbyigsu gces pa'i sku la
- 4 sku snyung myi mnga' bar khums / mchid gi yi ge la ... snyung gsol
zhing [...ci gnang / slad na] rgya'i rgyal
- 5 'khams nas hwa shang btsun pa ched {po} zhig {pu} rgya gar gi yul
du shag kya thub pa'i zhal mthong {du} mchi ba lags /
- 6 'di tshun chad du yang bdag cag {ngan} pa {gser} pa'i dge ba'i bshes
gnyen {rnams kyis kyang} bskyal rim par
- 7 [bgyis pa lags/ de yang de phan chad du yang thugs dam la dgongs pa
'i] dge ba'i bshes nyen dang
- 8 [chab srid] ...gs {rin} zhang lon rga las stsogs pa rnams kyis kyang /
de bzhin du thugs dam dang chab srid la
- 9 [dgongs] ste bsu bskyal rim pa ra[=par] <myi mdzad du myi rung>
+mdzad nas sprin chen gtsug lag khang du myi bskyal du myi rung+ //
//lha myi phyogs kyang de bzhin du dgongs par gsol

This is addressed to the great elders and the great monks of the Longxing temple: a petitioning letter from Mog Bumdag. According to previous letters that have gone back and forth [between us], I hear that you have no injuries or disease and your bodies as valuable as gemstones are free from infirmity. Please send a letter about your health.

On to other matters. A monk from the empire of China, a great upholder of virtue, is going to the land of India in order to see the face of Śākyamuni. Up to this point we lowly ones, the spiritual guides of Serpa, have escorted him stage by stage. Therefore the spiritual guides who consider their vows of benevolence, the ... [of the] kingdom (chab srid), the uncle-ministers (zhang blon) and the rest should consider their vows and the kingdom. Escorting [the monk] by stages, take him to the Dayun monastery. It would be improper not to do so. I ask those in the religious and the secular spheres to consider this.

- 1 @ bstan pa {dang dge' 'dun} gi mnga' bdag /gnyi zla 'od sbyor gi
rkyen /'dzam bu gling [rgya]n dam pa' /slob ched po byang chub
- 2 rin po ches ...r du mdzad pa /thugs dam rtse gcig du mdzad pa'i dg[e
ba'i bshes gny]en sde tsogs kyi zha sngar// //
- 3 dmog 'bum bdag gis mchid gsol bas/ /snga slad 'drul ba las mchid
kyis {rmas} pa/ /spyi'i theg pa bskyang

4 ba dang ['grub mang po] {chen po} {rkyen} du 'gyur ba dang /thugs
 dam rtse gcig du mdzad pa'i dgongs pas sku mnyel ba ma lags
 5 pa / {sku ri}n po che dbyigs gces pa ma snyun [myi mnga' ba] khums
 /sprul chen sum cu las gus par snying gsol
 6 {bar} mchis / / [sla]d nas tong kun rgya rje'i spyā nga nas / hwa
 shang dka thub ched po mkhas pa'i phul du phyin pa cig
 7 {rgya gar gi} yul du shag kya thub pa'i {zhal} mthong du mchi ba
 lags /di tshun chad du bdag cag gser ba stong sde'i
 8 {dge slong} rnam kyis kyang /bsu <deletion> bskyal rim pas bgyis /
 <deletion> de phan chad du yang de bzhin thugs khral
 9 ... nas /thugs dam la dgongs pa ste /lung song gi lha sde'i stsam du
 myi bskyal du myi rung// //
 10 lha myi phyogs kyang de bzhin du myi dgongs su myi rung//

This is addressed to the lords of the teachings and the monastic community, they who unite the sun and the moon, the sublime ornaments of Jambudvīpa, the assembly of teachers who [venerate] their precious enlightened masters and who single-mindedly carry out their commitments: a petitioning letter from Mog Bumdag. According to what has been said in the previous letters that have gone back and forth [between us], your meditative activities of maintaining all the vehicles, ... becoming accomplished, single-mindedly [carrying out] your vows have not fatigued your bodies. I hear that your precious bodies, as valuable as gemstones, are free from infirmity. I request with devotion a letter from the thirty great emanations.

On to other matters. A monk coming from the presence of the Chinese emperor [at] Tongkun, a great ascetic and a particularly fine scholar, is going to India to see the face of Śākyamuni. Up to this point we the monks of the Serpa thousand district have escorted him stage by stage. Accordingly, from this point onward, [avoiding] unhappiness, not to consider your commitments and conduct him to the monastic estate of Longxing would be improper. It would be improper for any in the religious and secular spheres not to consider likewise.

Letters 4 and 5 are written in the same handwriting, and in both cases the sender identifies himself as Mog Bumdag (*Dmog 'bum bdag*). This unusual name could be translated as “master of a thousand troops.”⁴⁰ Although no

40 “A thousand troops” (*dmag 'bum*) appears in other Tibetan sources. This is reading *dmag* for *dmog*. However, the name appears twice, and *dmog* does not seem to be a

such title has been found in any other document, it is conceivably a local Tibetan military title (perhaps self-assigned). The author also refers to himself with the religious title of ‘spiritual friend’ (*dge ba’i bshes gnyen*) and as a monk (*dge slong*). This does not necessarily preclude his being a military leader as well (see Section 3 on Tibetan monastic lineages that allowed involvement in politics).

If Letter 3 was written in or near Liangzhou, as we suggested, these two letters may have been written at the next major town on the pilgrim’s route, Ganzhou. Now, Letters 4 and 5 appear to have been copied onto the scroll the wrong order. Letter 5 (which ought to come first) is addressed to a local monastery. The name of the addressee is not mentioned, but there is mention of “thirty great emanations” (*’sprul chen sum cu*), a number which suggests a rather large monastic establishment. The letter also suggests frequent communication between the sender and the addressee. Thus it is plausible that the addressee is in a monastery near Ganzhou. The letter asks for an escort to the Longxing (*lung song*) monastery 龍興寺.⁴¹

Letter 4 (which ought to come next) is addressed to the heads of Longxing monastery requesting an escort for the next stage of the journey: to the Dayun monastery. The escort is requested to accompany the monk “in stages” (*rim par*) suggesting that this part of the journey (between the Longxing and Dayun monasteries) may have included several major stopping-points along the way. The Dayun monastery that is the destination of this part of the journey could thus have been a monastery in Shazhou (i.e. Dunhuang) as a Dayun monastery is also attested there – see immediately below.⁴²

Also mentioned in both letters is a district called Serpa (*gser pa*), which is referred to in Letter 5 as a *thousand district* (*stong sde*), an important

scribal error. Another possible reading is *dmog* = *rmog*, as the *d* prefix sometimes changes to *r* in the Dunhuang manuscripts (e.g. *dnogs* → *rngos* in Or.8210/S.95/V.8, l.16).

41 This transcription is not attested elsewhere for the Longxing monastery. In Pelliot tibétain 999 we have *lung hung si* (ll.1–2). However, there is significant geographical and temporal distance between the Daozhao manuscript and Pelliot tibétain 999. While Pelliot tibétain 999 is dated to 842 and originates from Dunhuang itself, the relevant letters in the Daozhao manuscript are dated to the late 960s, over 120 years later, and originate from the Tsongka or Liangzhou area. Therefore, while the identification of the Tibetan transcription *lung song* with the Longxing monastery is uncertain, we do not think it unlikely. It is also significant that the Chinese name of the Longxing monastery 龍興寺 is written elsewhere on this side of the scroll.

42 Ning Qiang (2004: 113–114) suggests that the Dayun monastery at Dunhuang may be the identified with the cave temple with the giant Maitreya statue that is still found at the cliff site.

type of territorial division used in the Tibetan Empire. What it might mean here in a post-imperial context is unclear, but it may be a local district in the Liangzhou–Ganzhou area, or perhaps the larger area covered by these letters, encompassing Tsongka and Hezhou to the south as well (see the introduction to this chapter for further discussion of this term). Along with *thousand district* other terms from the imperial period crop up in these last two letters: *uncle-minister* (*zhang blon*) and *kingdom* (*chab srid*), and as we saw in Chapter 4, the imperial title *tsenpo* (*btsan po*) was used by local rulers at Liangzhou. These letters indicate the process by which the terminology of the imperial period was adopted by local Tibetan rulers after the fall of the empire. As mentioned earlier, the main reason is likely to have been to appropriate something of the prestige still associated with the fallen empire.

The statement in Letter 5 that the pilgrim has come from the presence of the Chinese emperor is particularly interesting. As we mentioned in Chapter 3, this links our monk to the large group of pilgrims whose travel was authorized by the Song emperor Taizu in the 960s. The Tibetan name of the emperor, *tong kun rgya rje*, may be another link to Taizu. The second part of the title is clear; we have good precedents for taking *rgya rje* to refer to the Chinese emperor.⁴³ The first part of the name is clearly not Tibetan, but does appear in later Tibetan literature (sometimes in the form *stong khun*) where its meaning has been debated. Since this occurrence in the manuscript represents the earliest appearance of the term, and has previously gone unnoticed, we will look in some detail what it could mean. It is almost certainly a transliteration of a Chinese term, as most other commentators have recognised.⁴⁴ The two most likely readings of *tong kun* are (i) Dongjun 東君, the “ruler of the East” in Chinese mythology, (ii) Dongjing 東京, the “Eastern capital” the name of the capital of the Song dynasty, now Kaifeng.⁴⁵

43 Several old sources, including the *Old Tibetan Annals* (Or.8212/187, ll.49, 54, 80). The Zhöl Pillar (South face, l.46; see Li and Coblin 1987: 144) and the Lhasa Treaty Pillar (West face, l.13; see Li and Coblin 1987: 38), use *rgya rje* to denote the emperor of Tang China. This use would have been well known to Tibetans. We should not take this meaning entirely for granted, as in the document Pelliot tibétain 1111 (l.19), we find *rgya rje* as the title of a local Chinese ruler, but this is an exception to the usual use.

44 This question has recently been addressed by the Tibetan scholar Skäl bzang thogs med (2006). However, his treatment does not consider this manuscript, or other early sources discussed here.

45 A third possibility was suggested by R.A. Stein: 唐君, “Ruler of the Tang [dynasty].”

On l’appelle aussi Tang-kun rgyal po avec la même épithète (Stein, *L’épopée de*

The reading of Tong kun as Dongjun 東君, the mythical “ruler of the East,” is given by the modern Tibetan-Chinese dictionary *Tshig mdzod chen mo*, in which *tong khun* is equivalent to *tūng kus*, the transliteration of 東君, defined as a term of respect.⁴⁶ This interpretation was originally suggested by the fourth Karmapa Rolpai Dorje (*Rol pa'i rdo rje*, 1340–1383), and is favoured by the contemporary Tibetan scholar Skäl bzang thogs med.⁴⁷ This is based on the appearance of the phrase “the Stong khun king (of) China” (*rgya nag stong khun rgyal po*) in several sources, the most famous being in a verse biography of Atiśa, the Indian saint who spent his later years in Tibet in the early eleventh century. The verses, written by Atiśa’s disciple Nag tsho (1011–1064), include comparison of the Indian king who was Atiśa’s father with the “The Stong khun king (of) China.” These verses became very well-known through being included in the first pages of Tsongkhapa’s *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*.⁴⁸ The strength of this interpretation is that (*s*)*tong k(h)un* offers a very close approximation of the pronunciation

Gesar..., p.78) ou encore Tong-khun, sTong-khun (‘khun) [dKar-chag du Tang-jur de Derguë, 274a, 282b, 318a]. Ca dernier nom est peut-être une transcription de chinois T’ang-kiun 唐君, “souverain des T’ang.” (Stein 1961: 29 n.70).

However, given the content of our letter, this reading is rather unlikely. It is conceivable that the Tibetan neighbours of China’s tenth century dynasties continued to refer to Chinese emperors with the name of the old Tang dynasty, but as this name is not attested in any Tibetan writings *during* the Tang dynasty, this would be a very speculative conclusion.

46 In addition, a modern dictionary of archaic terms, the *Bod yig brda rnying tshig mdzod* has an entry for *tong kun smad* (‘lower’ or ‘eastern’ *tong kun*), which it defines as either a place-name for Khotan, or as *rkong nyang*, the ruler of Khotan. This would seem to be a specific meaning created by adding *smad* (‘lower’ or ‘eastern’) and is probably not strictly relevant here, except to show that *tong kun* was used as an honorific for kings.

47 Skäl bzang thogs med 2006. His conclusion (translated from the Tibetan), is as follows:

To summarize what has been said above, this term *stong khun* is not a genuine Tibetan word. It means “a king of eastern China,” as stated by the all-knowing Rolpai Dorje. Later it was transliterated into Tibetan. Based on the methods for doing this, the Chinese word *dongjun* 東君 was transliterated as *stong khun* etc. based on its sound. As the phrase was widespread, minor regional differences appeared in the way it was written – this is certainly the reason. That is why, if one tries to understand the Tibetan word on its own, just according to the method of etymology, then certainly it hardly needs to be said that one will naturally fall down the precipitous cliffs of meanings. (Skäl bzang thogs med 2006: 277.)

48 See Tsong-kha-pa 2000: 36 (f.4), and p.377 n.8. See also *Blue Annals* p.297; translation in Roerich 1996: 31. The Tibetan text is cited in Skäl bzang thogs med 2006: 270.

of Dongjun 東君 in the tenth century. However, the phrase does not suggest conclusively that *stong khun* is a personal epithet rather than the seat of the emperor.

The second reading is supported by certain appearances of the term *tong kun* (with exactly the same spelling) as an apparent toponym in Tibetan literature. In a biography of the first Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa*, 1110–1193), there are several stories of past lives of the Karmapa and his interlocutors. In one such story we find a reference to Tong kun as a famous place which somebody wishes very much to visit.⁴⁹ In a different biography of Dusum Khyenpa there is a story about an Indian teacher who travelled from India to Tong kun in China.⁵⁰ We also find a reference, in the works of Jigten Gönpö (*'Jig rten mgon po*, 1143–1217), to the “seat of Tong kun (in) China” (*rgya nag tong kun gyi gdan*). Here Tong kun is said to be a place where precious vases are made.⁵¹

Thus we can be sure that (s)Tong k(h)un was used as a toponym in Tibetan literature. Now, *tong kun* is close to the tenth-century pronunciation of 東京 “Eastern capital.” There were several “eastern capitals” in the history of East Asia – Tōkyō is still one – but during the Song dynasty by far the most important was the Song capital, the modern city of Kaifeng. Therefore if the Tibetan word Tong kun is a toponym, then in the context of our manuscript it should refer to the Song capital. Supporting this is the fact that, as we saw in Chapter 3, a large number of monks were sent to India in the 960s by the first Song emperor Taizu, who had recently established his base at the Eastern Capital. In addition, the Eastern Capital 東京 was the starting point of the pilgrimage route detailed in the tenth century

49 See p.18 in *Rje 'gro ba'i mgon po rin po che'i rnam thar skyes rabs dang bcas pa rin chen phreng ba 'bring po*, attributed to a Bde chung ba. In another story in this text there is a reference to an Indian alchemist who was invited to China by the “Tong kun king” (*tong kun rgyal po*) and met him at Wutaishan (p.29). See *Selected Writings of the First Zhwa-nag Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa*.

50 See pp.75–76 in *Rje dus gsum mkhyen pa'i rnam thar*, attributed to Rgang lo tsa ba (perhaps Sgang lo tsa ba, 15th c.), and also found in the volume *Selected Writings of the First Zhwa-nag Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa*, Dzongsar Chhentse Labrang, Palace Monastery (Gangtok 1980).

51 See vol.4, p.95 of *The Collected Writings (Gsung-'bum) of 'Bri-gung Chos-rje 'Jig-rten-mgon-po Rin-chen-dpal*. On the same page there is also a reference to “the land of Po in China” (*rgya nag po'i yul*). It is clear in both cases that these are toponyms. Note that this follows the standard form of Tibetan toponyms, where a specific location can be preceded by a general location for the sake of clarification.

Many thanks to Dan Martin for locating these references.

manuscript Or.8210/S.383. In this case, our letter would be referring to “the Chinese emperor of the Eastern Capital.”

Throughout the tenth century there were several dynasties based at the Eastern Capital, which contributed to the city becoming the economic hub of Central China.⁵² Thus the Tibetans may have begun referring to “the emperor of the Eastern Capital” before Taizu established it as the capital of the Song in 960. It is interesting that the term does not appear in any pre-tenth century sources, in which the Chinese emperor is always referred to simply as “the Chinese emperor” (*rgya rje*). The phrase *tong kun rgya rje* may date from after the disintegration of the Tang dynasty, from the period when there were several rulers going by the name “Chinese emperor” and referring specifically to the emperor based at the Eastern Capital, Kaifeng.⁵³

The links between Kaifeng and the pilgrimage represented in the letters in the Daozhao manuscript, and the predominance of Kaifeng as the “Eastern Capital” during the tenth century, favours the second reading of the Tibetan transcription *tong kun* as 東君 “eastern capital”. This is supported by the appearance of the term as a toponym in the later Tibetan works mentioned above.⁵⁴ On the other hand, *tong kun* is an imperfect transliteration of 東君, because the second syllable should be pronounced closer to *king*, and indeed in other sources we find the Tibetan transcription *kying*. Therefore

52 The so-called “Five Dynasties” succeeded each other at Kaifeng between 907 and 960. The Later Zhou, which briefly preceded the Song dynasty during 951–60, unified much of northern China, and contributed to the reconstruction of Kaifeng and the surrounding regions (See Gernet 1996: 268, 300–301, 317). The outer walls of Kaifeng, which greatly expanded the city, were built in 954. For China’s neighbours, Taizu would at first have been merely the next in a line of recent imperial dynasties based at the Eastern Capital, rather than – as we know with hindsight – the founder of one of China’s major dynasties.

53 Kaifeng continued to be the most important mercantile city in China during the eleventh century, when there was a liberalization of regulations regarding travel and trade which made the city into a new kind of urban centre (Gernet 1996: 316–318). Even after Kaifeng fell to the Jurchens in the twelfth century, it remained the southern capital of the new Jin dynasty. It was only in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1378) that Kaifeng lost the title of “Eastern Capital” and was renamed Bianliang 汴梁. This also marked the beginning of the city’s decline. While we still see references to *Stong khun* in Tibetan literature after the fourteenth century, these apparently treat it as a synonym for China in general.

54 With regard to these later sources, we should also expect that the Tibetan interpretation of the term may have changed over time. As Skäl bzang thogs med (2006) has shown, the later Tibetan commentarial tradition was unsure of how to explain the term, and several interpretations were attempted.

we must leave these two possibilities open. In either case, given the date of 968 on Part C of the Daozhao manuscript, there is a good possibility that the Chinese emperor mentioned in the letter was indeed the first emperor of the Song dynasty, Taizu.

9.2.8 Concluding Tibetan notes

- 1 @//mkhan po gi sing tung gis 'od snang du
- 2 <@//sing tung> bskyal // 'od snang gi gnas stan gi sang rab gi sar
bskyal//slop pon rab gsal
- 3 gi mkhan po chos skyab gi sar rdzangs //

*Conducted by the sengtong of the abbot to Radiant Light [monastery].
Conducted by the elder of Radiant Light [monastery] to the residence of
Chang Rab[sal].*

Sent to the residence of Chökyab, the abbot of master Rabsal.

These notes detail the last stages of the monk's journey, at least as far as we have it recorded on this scroll. Unlike the Tibetan writings above, this is not a letter. These notes appear to have been written not for the benefit of the pilgrim monk, but as a record for the monastic officials mentioned in them. This may explain why the scroll was kept in Dunhuang – it became a record of the responsibilities fulfilled by the local monastic establishment. According to these notes the monk was first taken to the abbot of an establishment (presumably a monastery) called Radiant Light ('od snang).⁵⁵ From there he was escorted to the residence (sa) of a master Chang Rabsal – perhaps master of the Dayun monastery, the destination specified in the previous letter. The pilgrim seems to have received scant welcome here, as he was subsequently “sent” (rdzangs), presumably without an escort to the residence of Chökyab, who as an abbot would have been a rank lower than the master.

The presence of the Chinese official monastic title *sengtong* 僧統 suggests that this final part of the journey is within the area of Shazhou (Dunhuang) itself. The names of the other monastic officials continue to be Tibetan, although the name Chang Rabsal appears to be part-Chinese. He is apparently a master (*slob dpon*), one of the highest monastic ranks. Thus these notes may represent the pilgrim's arrival at the destination mentioned

⁵⁵ This could perhaps be a Tibetan name for the Jinguang (“Golden Light”) monastery at Dunhuang. There is no attested monastery in Dunhuang with a name that could be literally translated with 'od snang.

in the final letter above, the Dayun monastery, probably in Dunhuang itself. Interestingly, a monk with the name of Chang who is the master of the Dayun monastery at Dunhuang is mentioned in another manuscript, one of the Sino-Tibetan Buddhist glossaries.⁵⁶

The importance of the Chang (i.e. Zhang) family in Dunhuang has been discussed by Teiser:

Simply in terms of numbers the Changs, comprising several distinct lineages, were a powerful force in the region: between the years 775 and 1000, people with the surname Chang amounted to 16 percent of the recorded population of Tun-huang. Chang I-ch'ao (r.851–872) led an army that overthrew Tibetan rule over Tun-huang in 848. From 851 until about 920 the Chinese court bestowed the formal rights to rule the area, by hereditary succession, to three generations of Changs, according them the title Kuei-i-chün chieh-tu-shih (Military Commissioners of the Kuei-i Commandery). Before, during, and after the period of formal rule by the Chang family, members of the lineage were active, and at times preeminent, in the cultural life of Tun-huang. They wrote texts, commissioned scriptures, joined the Buddhist order, and paid for the construction of new grottoes.⁵⁷

Teiser also points out that the monk Daozhen, who greatly expanded the monastic library of Sanjie monastery in the tenth century, was a member of the Chang family. We can add that there are at least sixty names of members of the Chang family attested in the Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang. Some of these Changs were among the Chinese scribes made to copy the *Aparimitāyus* and *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras in Dunhuang, known to us from the colophons of these sūtras. Others were parties involved in contracts whose names are known to us from surviving contract manuscripts. Some of these Tibetan names are transcriptions of purely Chinese names, such as Cang cin dar (perhaps Zhang Jinda 張進達). Others, like the name in our manuscript, have a Tibetan name as well as the Chang surname; for example, Cang lha snang. We do not know whether the latter were of partial Tibetan descent, or simply Chinese who adopted a Tibetan name.⁵⁸

56 Pelliot chinois 2046 (= Pelliot tibétain 1257). The text is a Sino-Tibetan glossary of Buddhist terminology. The Tibetan colophon indicates that the Tibetan was written by a Dpal dbyangs. The name of Chang and the Dayun temple appear in the Chinese colophon.

57 Teiser 1994: 146.

58 See Ueyama 1990.

In the end, it seems that the last notes on the pilgrim's scroll were written in Dunhuang itself, as the scroll acquired a further function, serving as an official record for the Sino-Tibetan monks of Dunhuang in their housing of the pilgrim. We do not know what happened to the pilgrim himself after he was taken into the care of the monks of Dunhuang. But his manuscript – including these letters of passage – was soon consigned to Cave 17, where it joined thousands of others, and where it remained for the next nine centuries.

10 Conclusions

As we put the individual parts of the Daozhao manuscript back together and roll up the scroll, we may reflect on what this exercise – the attempt to reconstruct the social life of a single manuscript – has achieved. Like the activity of pilgrimage, our study of the Daozhao manuscript has been as much about the process as the goal. We have taken the manuscript apart piece by piece, examining the place of each part in its own tradition of signification: a copy of a Chinese inscription going back to the early seventh century; a Chinese apocryphal sūtra which was popular among travellers; Tibetan tantric texts containing some of the earliest examples of themes that became central to Tibetan Buddhism; and the pilgrim's letters of passage, revealing the mechanics of Chinese pilgrimage through a thriving Tibetan-speaking population in Amdo, interacting with Chinese travellers through the medium of their shared commitment to Buddhism. Each of these texts has its own history and background of cultural signification. Yet they are also intimately connected through their physicality to a particular place and time at the borderlands of Chinese and Tibetan culture in the late tenth century.

Our close reading of the individual parts of the Daozhao manuscript has shown that their pasting together was not haphazard, but evolved as the pilgrimage progressed. The scroll was a complex object of religious significance, similar versions of which were probably carried by other Buddhist pilgrims who travelled to India. It is also clear that the significance of manuscripts like this one extended beyond the text they carried. For example, the Tibetan tantric texts on Manuscript B verso could not even be seen, as they faced inward, with Manuscripts A and C glued onto them. This suggests that such texts were not always intended to be read, that they could fulfill their religious function by their physical presence and their inclusion in the act of pilgrimage.

Another thing that we have learned from the manuscript is that pilgrimages such as these were not understood as trips between two terminal points, such as Central China and India; the intermediate stations were equally important. The monk proceeded from monastery to monastery, not necessarily by the most direct route, presenting a letter of recommendation to each abbot along the way. This scroll was both a record of the pilgrimage and a

kind of spiritual certificate confirming the pilgrim's attainment of his goals at each stage of the journey. As he travelled farther west, he and his patrons continued adding to the scroll, accumulating both copies of administrative documents and mementos of sacred sites.

Why the manuscript ended up in the library cave at Dunhuang remains an open question. The manuscript itself does not include any information beyond the geographical limits of the Hexi corridor, which suggests that the pilgrim might have been using other similar manuscripts for the earlier and later stages of his journey. It is also possible, of course, that due to death, injury or other reasons, he was not able to go beyond Dunhuang, and his pilgrimage ended prematurely. As to why the manuscript was placed in the soon-to-be-sealed library cave, we should keep in mind one of the functions of the cave which we discussed earlier, that is, as a receptacle for offerings of dharma in the form of texts and paintings. The goal of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to India is often given in contemporary accounts as "seeking the dharma and obtaining scriptures." We have numerous records in historical sources of pilgrims bringing manuscripts with them as they returned from India. The case of Daozhao shows that manuscripts were also carried in the other direction. While not all of these would have qualified as "scriptures" in the same sense that Sanskrit sūtras did, they were dharma, and as we saw in Chapter 2, could function as relics.

In any case, the fact that Daozhao's manuscript was left in the cave led to its preservation for over a thousand years. After the opening of the cave, the manuscripts and paintings therein took on a new role, as precious artefacts held in museums, libraries and private collections. Many of the manuscripts became primary sources for the study of history and culture. In this new role, the Daozhao manuscript has proved particularly illuminating. The discovery of manuscripts, inscriptions or other archaeological material is always intriguing because it gives us the opportunity to assess and verify the received sources. At the same time, we judge all newly found material against our existing knowledge and try to place it within the historical narrative derived from extant texts. The Dunhuang manuscripts in this respect deserve our special attention, partly because of their exceptionally large number, and partly because they supply information about a region of which relatively little is known from traditional histories.

Dunhuang was one of the westernmost outposts of the Chinese cultural sphere of influence, the last stop before entering the desert. Its location was also emblematic of the border between civilization and wilderness: Chinese pilgrims travelling through here were leaving behind their native land to traverse the great desert that separated them from India, the destination of

their spiritual quest. These journeys, undertaken during the Tang and Song periods, have been a major theme in Chinese literature, igniting popular imagination for the past millennium and half. Though actual historical records of pilgrimages are not as numerous, the stories of the lives of famous monks preserved in literary and popular traditions provide many of the details of the journey to the West. The Daozhao manuscript is a unique first-hand witness of the mass pilgrimage movement that developed in the 960s, during the first years of the reign of Emperor Taizu, the founder of the Song empire.

The stele inscription copied on the manuscript allows us to establish that a Chinese pilgrim – whom we have called Daozhao after the name in the colophon – passed through Liangzhou in 968. This roughly coincides with the journey of two large groups of pilgrims (which may in fact overlap and at least partially refer to the same group) described in Chinese sources. The first group of 300 monks set out in 964; the second group of 157 monks departed in 966. Many of these pilgrims probably carried documents like the Daozhao manuscript, even if this is the only surviving example. As these pilgrims set out in the late 960s, Emperor Taizu was still trying to establish full control over his new empire. He was waging wars with his neighbours, while at the same time rapidly trying to put in place an efficient administrative system. Ideology, which included religion, was one his methods of winning support and increasing central control. It is in this context that Buddhist pilgrims were sent westward beyond the frontier and new regulations governing every aspect of monastic life were issued.

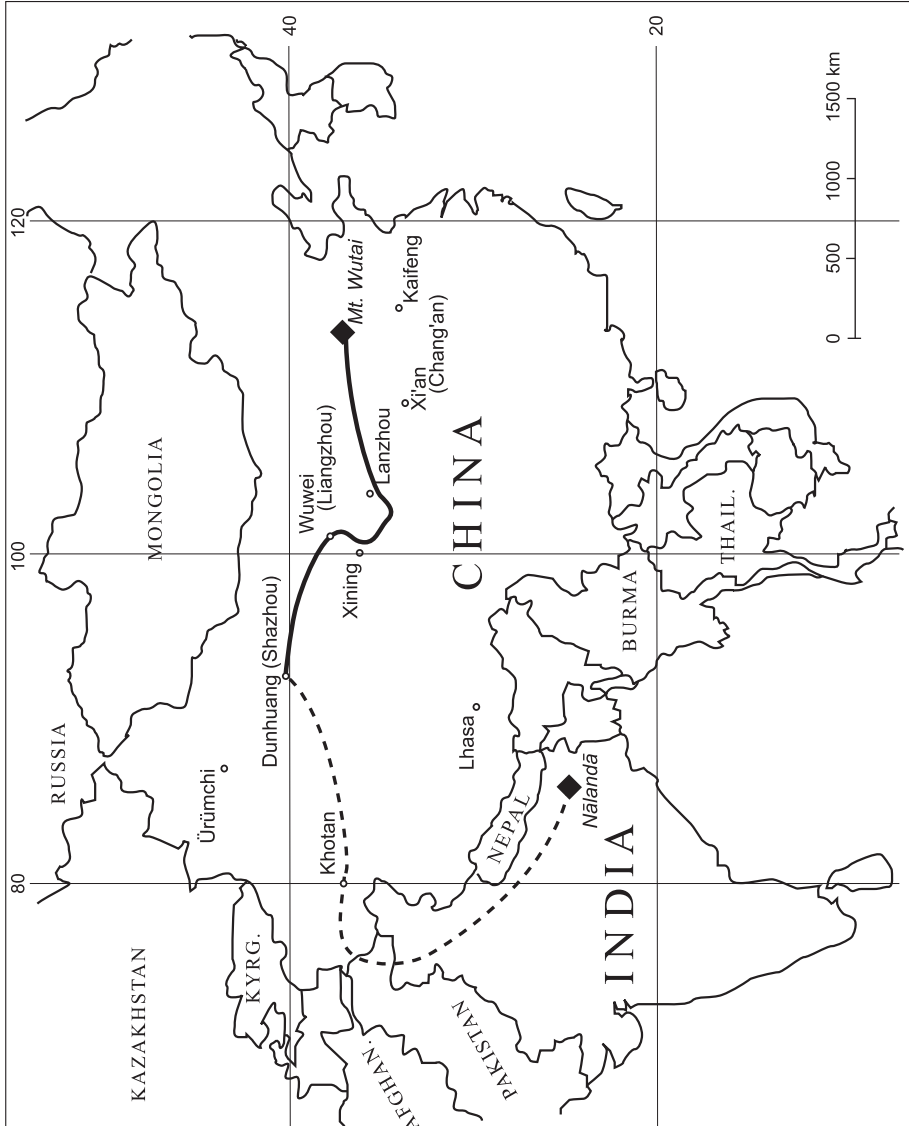
Most of these monks had to travel through the Hexi corridor and the city of Dunhuang, as Daozhao did on his way through the Tibetan-speaking region of Tsongka and Liangzhou. The letters of passage show the workings of a closely tied network of monasteries in the Hexi corridor and reveal something of the bureaucratic support network that allowed large-scale pilgrimage to take place. Most of the letters were written by secular officials to heads of monasteries, which suggests that it was not sufficient for a pilgrim to obtain letters of passage between monasteries without the involvement of the local administration. At each stage of Daozhao's journey through the area described by this manuscript, a Tibetan-speaking official providing him with a letter to the head of the local monastery asking for an escort to the next stage on the journey. The dividing line between secular and monastic realms becomes difficult to distinguish in the final letters, the author of which seems to straddle the roles of secular official and monk.

Divisions between language and ethnic groups are also dissolved within the manuscript. Chinese and Tibetan are the two languages by far most

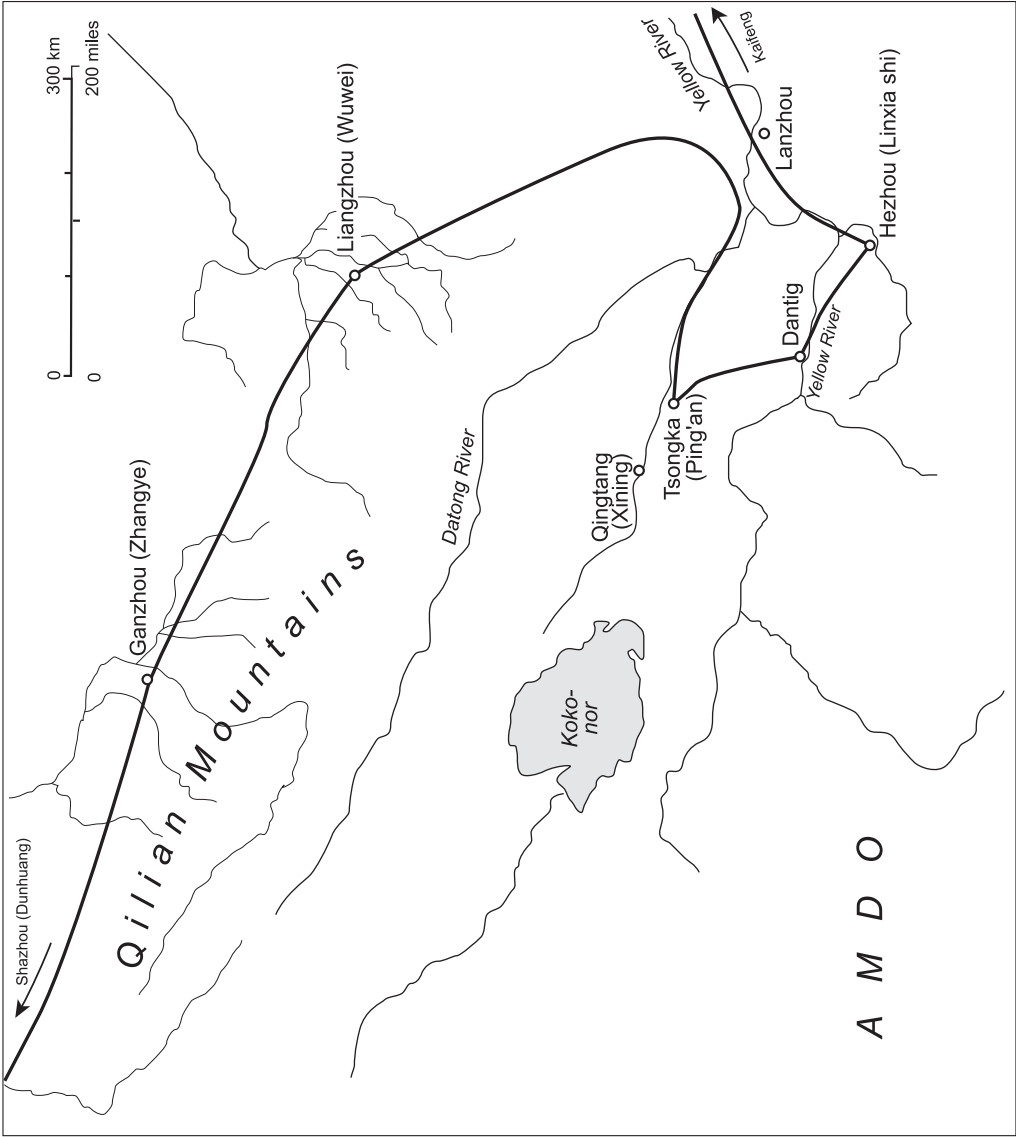
represented in the Dunhuang corpus, and the Daozhao manuscript is an example of these two being used in close conjunction. The Tibetan letters of passage are interspersed with notes in Chinese characters. Furthermore, the majority of these notes are in fact Tibetan names and titles, transcribed phonetically using the Chinese script, thus effectively mixing both languages and scripts. In its content as well, the Daozhao manuscript evidences a similar degree of ethnic, cultural and linguistic intermixing. Daozhao was Chinese but the letters of passage he carried with him were written in Tibetan. Thus Daozhao's manuscript is evidence for a strong degree of Tibetan cultural influence in this region during the tenth century, with the Tibetan language being used by local Tibetans, and spoken by Chinese as a *lingua franca* in both secular and monastic spheres.

Whether we look at the Daozhao manuscript as a single composite item, or focus on its individual parts, we are confronted with the intertextuality of manuscript culture. Not only the letters of passage, but each part of the manuscript is connected to the activity of Buddhist pilgrimage – even if that connection only reveals itself under close analysis. Even examined in isolation, each part of the manuscript, whether a copy of a temple inscription, a Chinese sūtra, a series Tibetan tantric texts, links us back again and again to the pilgrim and his journey.

Maps



Map 1. The monk's planned pilgrimage route from Mount Wutai in Central China to the Nālandā monastery in Northern India. The dotted line indicates the portion of the journey for which we have no documentation.



Map 2. The monk's route through the Hexi region, as evidenced in the Tibetan letters of passage.

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Index

- Abhidharma, 70, 142
abbot, 18, 152, 157–158, 160, 174
Achuda, Gelong, 40, 42–43
Afghanistan, 17
Aksu, 49, 54
almanac, 31, 139
altar, 18–19
Amdo:
 dialect, 81, 150, 156
 region, 4, 43, 47, 59, 61, 63–74
Amoghapaśa, 131–133
Amṛtakunḍali, 134
amulet, 19
An Lushan 安祿山, 61
Ānanda, 111
Anchung Namdzong, 70
Anlezhou 安樂州, 46
Anuyoga, 136
apocryphal sūtras, 8, 15, 107–108
Arthasiddhi, prince, 42–43
Aśoka, 97
Atiśa, 171
Atiyoga, 136
Avalokiteśvara, 9, 82, 131–134
Azha, 46, 61. *See also*: Tuyuhun
- Ba clan, 63
Ba Khobzher Legteng (dba' kho bzher
 legs stengs), 63
Baimasi 白馬寺. *See*: Martsang
Bamiyan, 19
Baochang 寶唱, 114
Baoenjing 報恩經, 8–9, 81–82, 106–126,
 131, 137
 Daoyuan's copy of, 104, 119–120
 Uighur manuscripts of, 117–118
bianwen 變文 (transformation texts), 17
Bibliothèque nationale de France, 14
bilingual texts, 29–32, 81
Bonpo tradition, 70
book cemetery, 21–22
bookbinding, 17–18
British Library, 8, 14, 77, 117–118
British Museum, 14
Buddhist canon, 37–38, 107–108,
 116–117
calamus, 80, 82–85, 88–89, 108
- Cang Ci 倉慈, 2–3
Cave 17. *See*: Dunhuang library cave
Cao 曹 family, 67, 87
Cao Qingjing 曹清淨, 104
Chang family. *See*: Zhang family
Chang Rabsal (cang rab sal), 174
Chang'an 長安, 62
Chavannes, Édouard, 117
Chengdu 成都, 38
Chökyab (chos skyabs), 174
Christianity, 16
Chu Sanzang jiji 出三藏記集, 107
Cintāmaṇicakra, 131–132
clerical script. *See*: *lishu*
codex, 18
colophon, 2, 8, 48, 87–89, 104, 118–
 119
concertina, 17–18
Confucianism, 37, 94
contracts, 17, 67
cooks, 30
- Da Tang Xiyu qiufo gaoseng zhuan* 大唐
 西域求法高僧傳, 35
Dafangbian Fo baoenjing 大方便佛報恩
 經. *See*: *Baoenjing*
Dan Yönten Chog, 157–158. *See also*:
 Yönten Chog

- Dantig Shan, 40–43, 149–150, 158, 161–163
- Dao'an 道安, 93–94, 96–99, 102–103
- Daoism, 16, 93–94
- Daoxuan 道宣, 39, 97–100, 102–103
- Daoyuan 道圓, 37, 48–49, 104–106, 119–122, 124–125
- Daozhen 道真, 23–27, 175
- Dashi kingdom 大石國, 50
- Dayun monastery 大雲寺, 47, 165–167, 169, 174–175
- Dekham (bde khams), 62, 67, 69
- Delön (bde blon), 62
- Dequan 德全, 59
- Desert of Ghouls (Kumtura), 53–54, 56
- Desongtsen, 63
- Devaputra, 140
- dhāraṇī (sacred spell), 130–132, 152, 159
- dharma, 19–20, 111–112, 128, 178
 searching for (*qiufa* 求法), 36, 106, 178
- dharma king, 153–154
- dharma-śarīra* (dharma relics), 20, 25
- Dharmasattvī, 133
- Diamond Sūtra*, 15–16, 25
- Diamond Throne, 53, 55
- Dingzhou 定州,
- divination, 17, 32–33, 132
- Domé (mdo smad), 61
- Dongjun 東君 (ruler of the East), 168, 170–173
- Dowi Khar, 164
- Drum Yeshé Gyaltzen ('grum ye shes rgyal mtshan), 71–72
- Dunhuang cave library, 13–29, 107, 117, 120, 124, 127, 139, 143–144, 174. *See also*: Mogao caves
- Dunhuang (town):
 Buddhism, 13, 16–17, 143
 Chang (Zhang) family, 175–176
 and Daozhao manuscript, 79, 87, 139–141, 154–156, 169, 174–179
 invasions, 26–27
 and Liu Sahe, 82
 pilgrimage route, 47–52, 56–57, 59, 105
 Tibetan occupation and influence, 16–17, 20, 23, 29–32, 62–68, 175
- Dunnell, Ruth, 66, 74
- Dusum Khyenpa (dus gsum mkhyen pa), 172
- Eastern Capital 東京, 49–50, 53–56, 170–173. *See also*: Kaifeng
- Ekādaśa-mukha*, 131
- Emperor Wu 武帝, 94, 96–98
- Emperor Xiaomin 孝閔帝, 94
- Emperor Yang 煬帝, 88, 97–99
- Empress Wu 武則天, 166
 characters of 武周新字, 119
- Enoki Kazuo 榎一雄, 80, 87–88
- era of fragmentation (sil bu'i dus), 4, 127, 130, 147–148
- Erjiao lun* 二教論, 93–94, 96, 98
- Eyou 惡友, prince, 111–112
- Faju piyu jing* 法句譬喻經, 113–114
- Facheng 法成. *See*: Go Chödrup
- Fan Chengda 范成大, 49–50
- Fang Guangchang 方廣錡, 116
- Faxian 法顯, 35, 154
- Five Dynasties 五代, 87, 101
- flowers, made of paper, 17, 26
- Fo benxing jijing* 佛本行集經, 113
- Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀, 51
- funerary caves, 18–19, 25
- funerary texts, 34, 131
- Gansu 甘肅, 1, 7, 64–65, 79, 148
- Gantong monastery 感通寺, 8, 58–59, 83–103, 166
- Gantong stūpa 感通塔, 74
- Ganzhou 甘州, 105, 140, 142, 149, 169–170
 in Daozhao manuscript, 46–57, 161–164, 166
 under Uighur rule, 64–65
- Gaochang 高昌, 50, 53–54, 95–96, 102
- Gelu 割祿, 48–49, 53–54
- geniza, 21
- German National Library, 117
- Gewa Rabsel (dge ba rab gsal), 40, 42, 69–72

- Giles, Lionel, 118
 glossaries, 29–31, 140, 175
 Go Chödrup (Facheng 法成), 30
 Godan Khan, 66
 Golden River, 150
 Gomadevi, 137
 Gongpa Rabtsel (dgongs pa rab gsal). *See*:
 Gewa Rabtsel
 gongping 公憑, 3
Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path,
 171
 grid lines, 108, 120–124
Guang Hongmingji 廣弘明集, 98
 Guazhou 瓜州, 47, 50, 53–54, 62, 69–70
Guhyasamāja, 130, 137
 Guiwen 歸文, 57–59
 Guiyijun 歸義軍. *See*: Return to Allegi-
 ance Army
 Guṇavarman, 114
 guosuo 過所, 3

 Hamilton, James, 118
 handwriting, 8–9, 79–82, 108–110,
 138–140, 165
 identification, 83–85, 89
 mistakes, 33–34, 145
 Hartmann, Jens-Uwe, 19
 Hayagrīva, 134
 Hexi 河西, 36, 178–179, 183
 dialect, 81, 152–153
 pilgrimage route, 36, 51–52, 57, 59,
 154, 179
 Tibetan presence in, 36, 59, 62–65, 73,
 147
 Uighurs in, 64
 writing habits in, 85
 Hezhou 河州, 39–40, 74, 149–150,
 161–163
 Huase 華色, 112
 Huguosi 護國寺, 74
 Huida 慧達. *See*: Liu Sahe
 Hongbian 洪辯, 18–19, 25
 Huang Shengzhang 黃盛璋, 56
 Huart, Clément, 117

 Ikeda On 池田溫, 87, 95
 Imaeda, Yoshiro, 131

 imperial preceptor, 66
 India Office Library, 14, 77, 124
 Indrabhūti, king, 137
 inscription,
 in Daozhao manuscript, 2, 8, 29, 79,
 83, 87, 99–103, 177–180
 at Gaochang, 95–96
 and Hongbian, 18
 at Liangzhou, 101–102
 on Tibetan monasteries, 73–74
 See also: Zhöl pillar inscription
 Institute for Spreading the Dharma 開寶
 藏, 38
 Institute for the Translation of Sūtras 譯
 經院, 38
 Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (St
 Petersburg), 14
 Islam, 26–27
 Iwasaki Tsutomu 岩崎力, 152

 Jalandar, 53–54
 Jambudvīpa, 168
 Jentsa (Jionza), 163
 Jetavana, 90–93, 95
Ji Shenzhou sanbao gantong lu 集神州三
 寶感通錄, 88, 96, 98–99, 102
 Jiezhou 階州, 50
 Jigten Gönpö ('jig rten mgon po), 172
Jinaputra-arhasiddhi-sūtra, 42–43
 Jingju monastery 淨居寺, 160
 Jingzhou 涇州, 65
 Jinling 金陵, 97
 Jishi Gorge 積石峽, 40
 Judaism, 16, 21
 Juesiluo 隴廝囉, 66
 Jurchens, 173

Kaibao Tripitaka 開寶藏, 38
 Kaifeng 開封, 38, 52–57, 170–173
 kaishu 楷書 (normal script), 85
 Kaiyuan monastery 開元寺, 57
Kaiyuan Shijiao lu 開元釋教錄, 24, 108
 Kamalog, 63–64
 Kamitsuka Yoshiko 神塚淑子, 114–115
 Kapstein, Matthew, 140
 Karakhanids, 26
 Karashahr, 48–50

- Kashmir, 48–50, 53–54, 56
 Khartsen (khar tsan), 46
 Khepa De'u (mkhas pa lde'u), 40
 Khora, village, 40
 Khotan, 62, 67, 104, 119, 141
 and Dunhuang, 26–27
 pilgrimage, 37, 48–50, 53–54, 106, 119, 141
 Khotanese texts, 104, 119, 121–125, 140
 Kieschnick, John, 25
 kīla (ritual dagger), 134–135
 Kokonor, Lake, 61–62, 64–65, 147
 Kopytoff, Igor, 5
 Kuangye 曠野, 53–55
 Kubilai Khan, 64, 66
 Kubler, George, 6
 Kucha, 48–49, 53–54
 Kumtura. *See*: Desert of Ghouls

Laṅkāvatāra sūtra, 30–31
 land and tax registries, 17
 Lang Darma (glang dar ma), 69–70, 127
 Lanzhou 蘭州, 46, 79
 Li Yuan 李遠, 73
 Liangzhou 涼州, 46–47, 140
 in Daozhao manuscript, 79, 83, 149, 154–157, 161–166, 169–170, 179
 and Liu Sahe, 97–103
 pilgrimage route, 50–52, 105
 Tibetan rulers, 36, 44, 64–67
 Sino-Tangut stele, 74
 See also: Gantong Monastery
Lidai sanbao ji 歷代三寶紀, 108
 Ligeti, Lajos, 21–22
 Lin Hsienting 林顯庭, 114
 lingua franca, 29, 67, 143, 180
 Lingwu 靈武, 50
 Lingzhou 靈州, 53–57, 59, 163
 Linxia 臨夏, 40
 lishu 隸書 (clerical script), 84, 89
 Liu Sahe 劉薩訶, 83, 96–97, 102
Liudu jijing 六度集經, 113
 Longxing monastery 龍興寺, 159, 167–169
 Lop Nor desert, 62

 Lotön (lo ston), 72
Lotus Sūtra, 15, 116
 Lumé (klu mes), 72

 Ma De 馬德, 87–88, 93
 Madhusādhū, 130
 Mahābala, 134
Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtra, 116
 Mahāyāna, 15–16, 113
 Mahāyoga, 9, 82, 127–131, 133–139, 143–146
 Maitreya, 42, 44
 maṇḍala, 45, 133–136
 Manichaeism, 16
 Mañjuśrī, 141, 157
 mantra, 32, 129, 132, 135, 137
 manuscripts:
 collecting, 20
 composite, 9
 forgery, 28–29
 fragmentary, 19–22, 24, 115–117, 120, 133
 functions, 2, 6
 interral, 20, 24–25, 27
 materiality, 4–6
 secular, 17–18, 21, 26, 31
 votive, 19
 Maoxian 鄯縣, 97
 Martsang monastery, 44–45
 material culture, 4, 6, 25
 Māyā, queen, 109, 112
 Mazar Tagh, 155
Mdo smad chos 'byung, 63
 medical texts, 8, 33, 104, 119, 124, 137–138
 Meidi monastery 昧底寺, 53–55
 merit (Buddhist), 15–17, 24–27, 118–119
 Mog Bumdag (dmog 'bum bdag), 151–152, 167–168
 Mogao caves 莫高窟, 13, 16, 21, 47–48, 83, 96, 100, 116, 124, 175–177, 178
 monastic library, 7, 21, 23–27, 175
 Mongols, 16, 39, 46, 66, 150
 Mount Daṇḍaka, 43
 Mount Emei 峨嵋山, 49–50
 Mount Kongtong 崆峒, 90–92
 Mount Potalaka, 53–55

- Mount Yu 御山, 83, 90, 96–97, 100–101
 multilingualism, 29–33, 143, 147, 180
 murals, 18, 27, 45, 47, 96, 100, 116
 Muslims, 40
- Nagtsho (nag tsho), 171
 Nagara, 53–55
 Nāgārjūna, 16
 Naitō Tatsuo 内藤龍雄, 113–115
 Nālanda monastery, 48, 53–55, 149, 161–162, 164
 National Library of China, 14
 National Museum of India, 14
 Nelpa Paṇḍita (nel pa paṇḍita), 71
 Ngog Luzhi Namka (ngogs lu zhi nam ka), 151, 161–162
Nirvāṇa sūtra, 49–50
 Nub Palgyi Jangchub (gnubs dpal gyi byang chub), 71
 Nub Sangyé Yeshé (gnubs sangs rgyas ye shes), 157–158
 Nyangral Nyima Özer (nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer), 71
- offerings, 19, 25–26, 166, 178
 officials,
 in Daozhao manuscript, 148, 151–162, 165–166, 174, 179
 in Dunhuang, 67
 and passports, 2–3
 and Song dynasty, 36–37, 51
 and Tibetan empire, 63
Old Tibetan Annals, 32, 44, 163
 oral transmission, 82, 135, 142–145
 ordination lineages, 44, 69–72
 Ösung ('od srung), 62, 127
Overcoming the three poisons, 131
- Padmasambhava, 130
 paintings, 17–19, 24–26, 28, 136, 178
 Pakistan, 17
 palm leaf, 17, 48–51
 Pāṇḍaravāsini, 134
 Panluozhi 潘羅支 ('phan bla rje), 66
 Pamir, 50
 passports, 2–3
 patrons, 17–18, 129
- Pelliot, Paul, 14, 26, 28, 117
Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra, 15–16
 persecution of Buddhism, 4, 37, 69–70, 99
 Persia, 46
 Petech, Luciano, 159
 phrasebooks, 30–31, 140–142
 pothi, 17–18
 prayers, 32, 34, 139
 Precept Master, 23, 104, 158
 Prince Qi 齊王, 97–99, 101
 printing, 16, 20, 27
 Puhrang (pu hrang), 127
 Pure Land monastery 淨土寺, 160
 Purusapura, 48–50, 53–54
Pusa bensheng manlun 菩薩本生鬘論, 113
Pusa benyuan jing 菩薩本緣經, 113
Pusa benxing jing 菩薩本行經, 113
Pusa shanjie jing 菩薩善戒經, 114
- Qinzhou 秦州, 65
 Qinghai 青海:
 region, 1, 7, 64, 148
 lake. *See*: Kokonor
Qingtang Lu 青唐錄, 73
 Qu Bin 麴斌, 95
Questions and Answers on Vajrasattva, 130, 136
 qujing 取經 (acquiring holy scriptures), 51, 106, 178
 Quluoli 佉羅理, 53–55
- Radiant Light monastery, 174
 Rājagṛha, 53–55
 refugee monks, 4, 44, 70
 relics, 20, 48–52, 156–157, 161–165, 178
 Renzong 仁宗, Song emperor, 38
 Return to Allegiance Army (Guiyijun 歸義軍), 62–64, 87, 175
 Richardson, Hugh, 163
 Rinchen Dorjé (rin chen rdo rje), 151, 153–154, 164–165
 rituals, 9, 16, 19, 129–138
 tantric 32, 34
 texts 32, 109–110, 125
 Roerich, George, 81

- Rolpai Dorje (rol pa'i rdo rje), 171
 Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, 23–24, 26–27, 57, 59, 159
Route to India. See: Xitian lujing
 Ruixiangsi 瑞像寺, 88, 96–99
- Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*, 31
 sādhana (meditation instructions), 16, 82, 130–136, 140
Sahasrabhuja-sahasranetra, 131
 Śakrapuṭi, 137
 Śākyamuni, 42, 156–157, 161–162, 165, 167–168
 Salomon, Richard, 20
 Sangha Ching, 64
 Sanjie monastery, 23–24, 26–27, 175
 Sanskrit manuscripts, 14, 22, 48–52, 115, 178
Sapoduo pini piposha 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙, 114
 Śāriputra, 112
Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha tantra, 133
 Sattva, prince, 50
 scribal errors, 144–146
 seals:
 Buddhist monasteries, of, 23
 four, the, 134–135
 Seda county, 150
 Sengyou 僧祐, 107, 114
 sengtong 僧統, 152, 174
 Serpa, 150, 167–169
 Shanyou 善友, prince, 112
 Shanzhou 鄯州, 63
Shape of Time, The, 6
 Shazhou 沙洲, *See: Dunhuang* (town)
 Shengrongsi 聖容寺, 100–101, 103
Shijia fangzhi 釋迦方志, 39
 Shizong 世宗, Later Zhou emperor, 37
 Shule 疎勒, 50, 53–54
 Shuofang 朔方, 51, 105
 Skal bzang thogs med, 171
Social Life of Things, The, 5
 Sogdians 2
 Sönam Tsemo (bsod nams rtse mo), 71
 Song Annals (*Songshi* 宋史), 152, 155, 159
 Stein, Aurel, 19–20, 26
 acquisition of manuscripts by, 13–14, 28, 47–48, 77, 124
 collection, 14, 52, 118, 130
 stele. *See: inscription*
 stotra, 131–132
 stūpa, 19, 92, 97
 Sujāti, prince, 111
Sukhāvativyūha sūtra, 30–31
 superstition, 19–20
Sūtra of Golden Light, 15
 Suzhou 肅州, 47–50, 53–54, 62, 101
- Tabo monastery, 163
 Taiping Xingguo monastery 太平興國寺, 38
 Taishō Tripitaka, 107
Taizi Xudanuo jing 太子須大拏經, 43.
 See also: Jinaputra-arthasiddhi-sūtra
 Taizong 太宗, Song emperor, 38
 Taizu 太祖, Song emperor, 36–39, 48–49, 104, 170–174, 179
 Taizu Wen 大祖文, Northern Zhou emperor, 90–91, 94
 Takata Tokio 高田時雄, 81, 141
 Takeuchi Tsuguhito 武內紹人, 67, 148
 Tanguts, 26, 46–47, 65–66, 150, 157
 Tante Shan 檀特山, 43
 tantric texts, 2, 9, 32–34, 68, 143–146. *See also: Anuyoga, Mahāyoga, sādhana*
 Tārā, 28
 tax registries, 17
 Teiser, Stephen, 23, 175
 Thomas, F.W., 80, 153
 Tianshou temple 天壽院, 49–50
 Tianshui 天水, 65
 Tianzhu 天竺, 48–50, 53–55
 Tibet:
 army, 30, 44, 61, 63, 65
 histories, 4, 40, 62, 69, 127
 kingdoms, 8
 script, 29–34, 67–68, 81
 Tibetan empire,
 collapse and aftermath, 4, 17, 32, 61–69, 127–130, 143, 170
 and Daozho manuscript, 147–154

- and Dunhuang manuscripts, 16, 24, 30–32
 in Hexi, 36, 44, 62–64, 163
 Toleu Tagsum (to le'u stag gsum), 151, 156–157
 Tongkun. *See*: Dongjun
 trade, 1–3, 36, 173
 routes, 1, 29, 36
Travel Records in the Kingdoms of Central India. See: Zhongtian zhuguo xingji
 Tri Detsugtsen (khri lde gtsug brtsan), 69
 Tri Song Detsen (khri song lde brtsan), 40, 62–63, 151
 Tri Tsug Detsen (khri gtsug lde brtsan), 16, 40, 70, 151, 163
 Tsongka, 43–46
 in Daozhao manuscript, 80, 149–150, 157, 161–163, 166, 169–170
 pilgrimage route, 72, 74, 179
 Tibetan rulers, 62–67
 Tsongkhapa (tsong kha pa), 171
 Tubo (*also*: Tufan) 吐蕃, 65
 Turfan, 3, 95, 116–117
 Tuṣṭita heaven, 95
 Tuyuhun 吐谷渾, 1, 46, 61, 154. *See also*: Azha

 Udmunten ('u'i dum brtan). *See*: Lang Darma
 Uighur:
 kingdom, 64–65
 language, 15
 manuscripts, 116–118
 people, 47, 51, 64–65
 rulers, 47, 67
 unicorn, 93
 Upāli, 111–112, 122
Upāyapāśa, 130
 Uray, Géza, 67, 163

 Vajradhātu, 133
 Vajrakīlaya, 82, 131, 134
 Vajrasattva, 82, 135–136
 Vajrayāna, 142
 de la Vallée Poussin, Louis, 78
 Vārāṇasi, 53–55, 112

 Vasubhandu, 16
 Vermeesch, Sem, 37
 vidhi (ritual manual), 130
 vinaya (monastic rules), 16, 40, 69–71, 142
 Viśaśūra, 141
 Vulture Peak, 90–93, 111, 161–162

 Wang Yuanlu 王圓籙 (Abbot Wang), 13–14, 28
 Wang Xuance 王玄策, 35–36
 Wangna Zhengyu, 74
 waste theory, 20–21, 24
Wenxian tongkao 文獻通考, 48, 105, 119
 Wutaishan 五台山, 39, 103, 141, 149, 161–162
 Wuwei 武威, 46, 101

 Xiangshan 香山, 95
Xianyujing 賢愚經, 113–114, 117
 Xiliang 西涼, 50–51, 105. *See also*: Liangzhou
 Xingkong 性空, 104, 119, 122, 124–125
 Xin Wenxiang 辛聞香, 118–119
 Xingqin 行勤, 48–49, 56–57, 103, 105
Xitian lujing 西天路竟 (A Route to India), 36, 49, 52–57
 Xixia 西夏. *See*: Tangut
Xu Gaoseng zhuan 續高僧傳, 99–100, 102
 Xuan Yuan 軒轅 (Yellow Emperor), 92
 Xuanzang 玄奘, 3, 35, 83, 154

 Yamāntaka, 134
Yaoshijing 藥師經, 124
 Yaozhou 耀州, 49–50
 Yarkhoto, 117
 Yarlung (yar klungs) dynasty, 4
 Yarlung valley, 150
 Ye 業, 49–50
 Yellow River Valley, 40, 43–44
 Yeshé Ö (ye shes 'od), 128–130
 Yijing 義淨, 35, 48
 Yiwu 伊吳, 50
 Yizhou 伊州, 49–50, 53–54, 56, 67
 Yoga tantra, 133, 135, 144
 Yuezhi 月氏, 53–54, 56

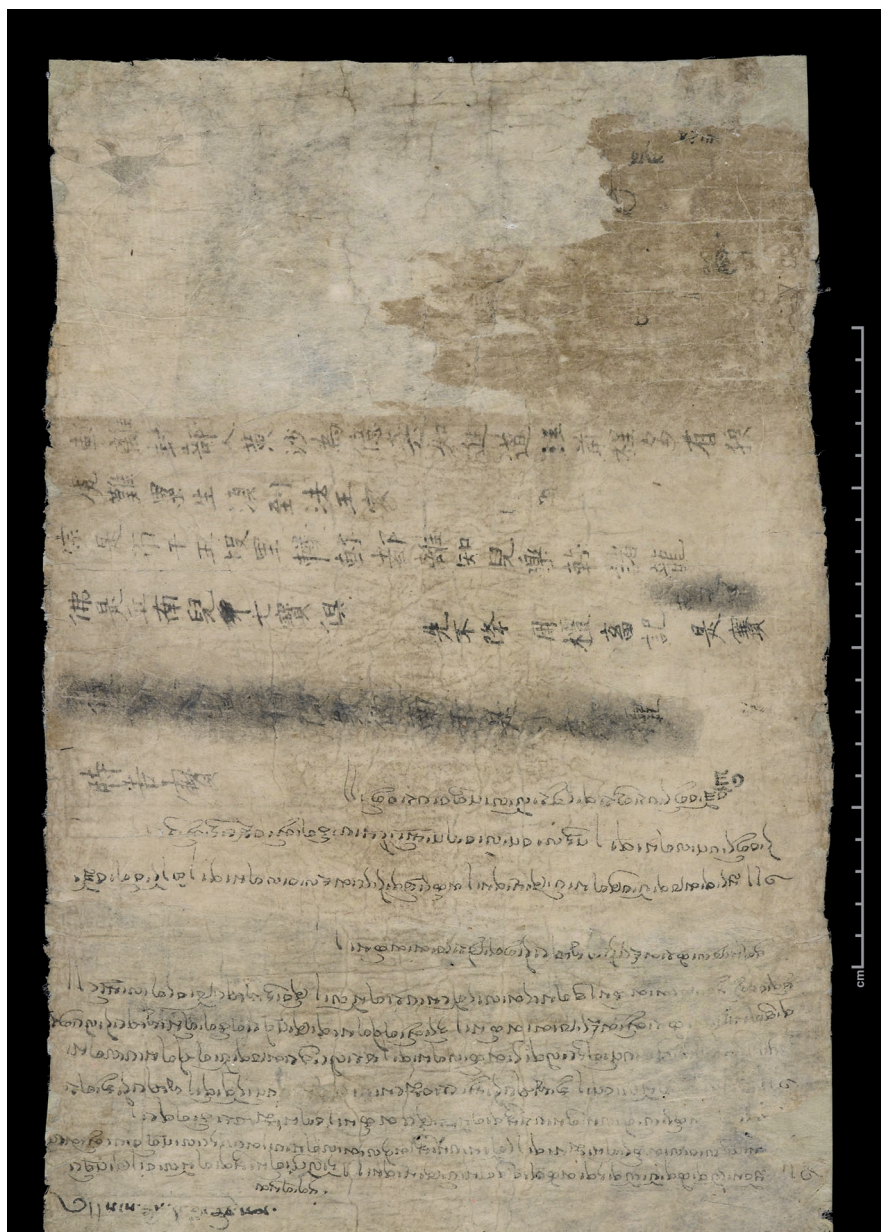
- Yumen Pass 玉門關, 53–54, 56
 Yuwen Jian 宇文儉, 94, 101
 Yuwen Tai 宇文泰, 94
 Yuwen Xian 宇文靈 . *See*: Prince Qi
Yogācārabhūmi śāstra, 30–31
 Yongchang County 永昌縣, 87
 Yongtan Chu 用檀畜. *See*: Yönten Chog
 Yönten Chog, 80, 151, 155–158

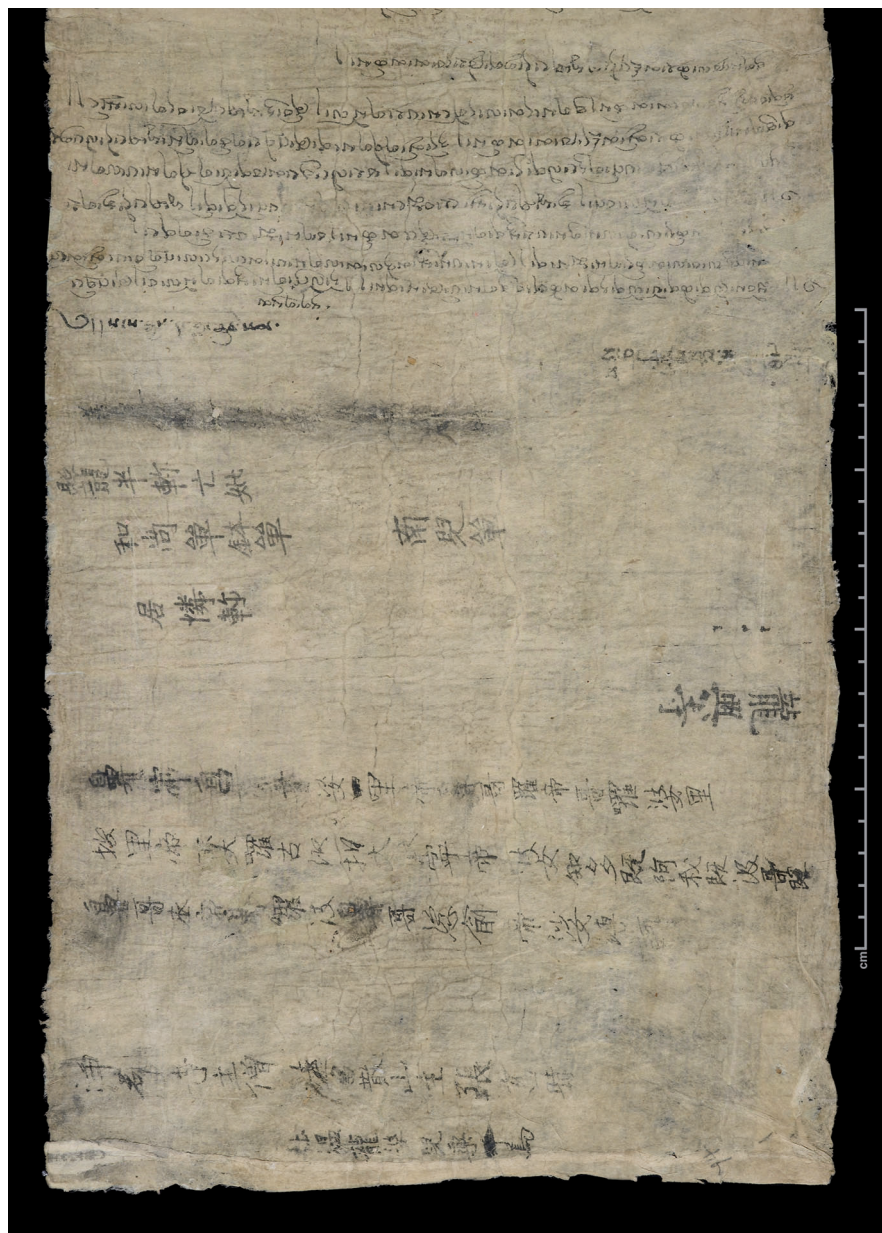
Za baozangjing 雜寶藏經, 113
 Zhalu monastery, 163
 Zhang family, 23, 175

 Zhang Yichao 張議潮, 62–64, 175
 Zhebu Gepi 折逋葛皮, 51, 105
 Zhebu Jiashi 折逋嘉施, 65
 Zhebu Yulongbo 折逋喻龍波, 65
 Zhelong 者龍, 46, 153, 155, 159
 Zhenzong 真宗, Song emperor, 38
 Zhipan 志盤 51
 Zhöl pillar inscription, 44, 163, 170
Zhongtian zhuguo xingji 中天竺國行記,
 36
 Zhuangzong 莊宗, Later Tang emperor,
 57–58

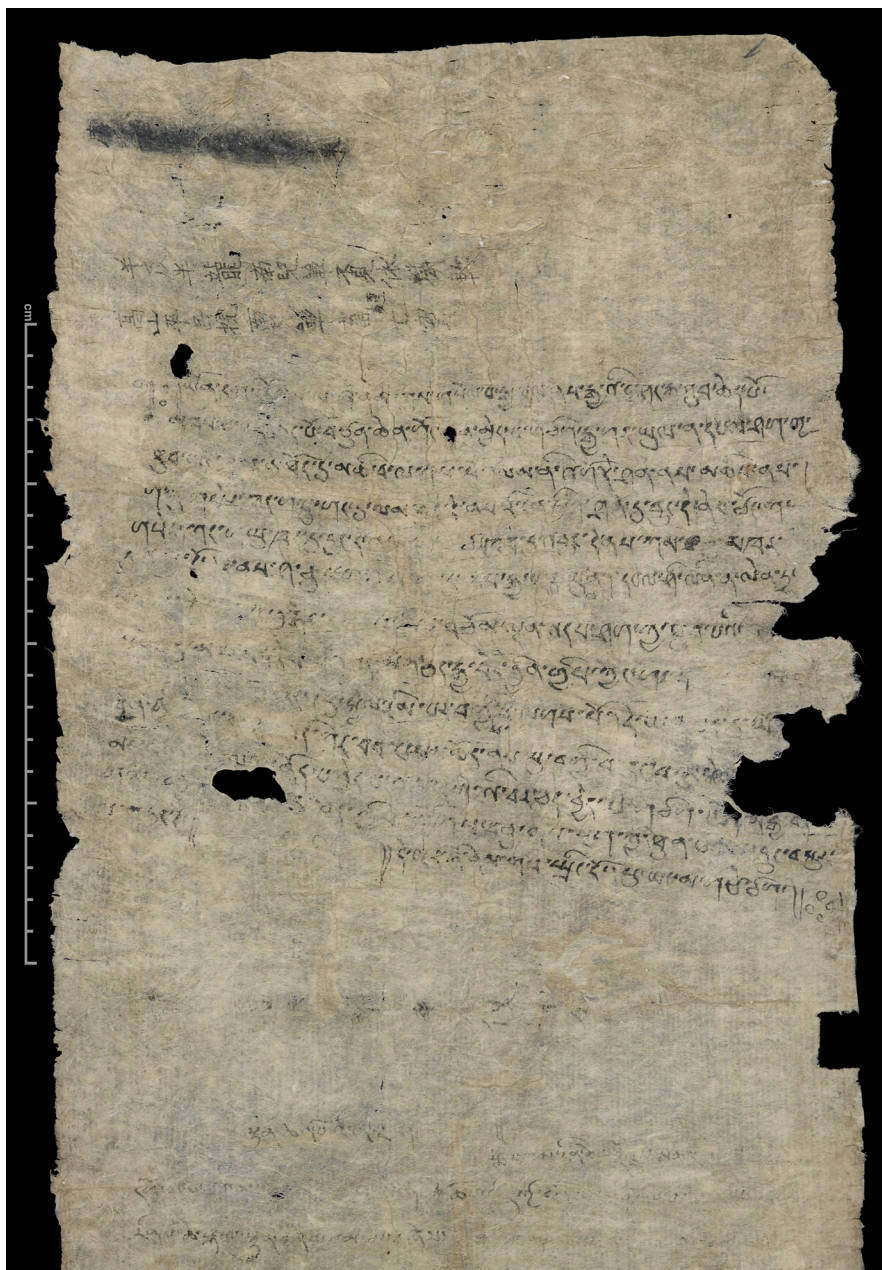
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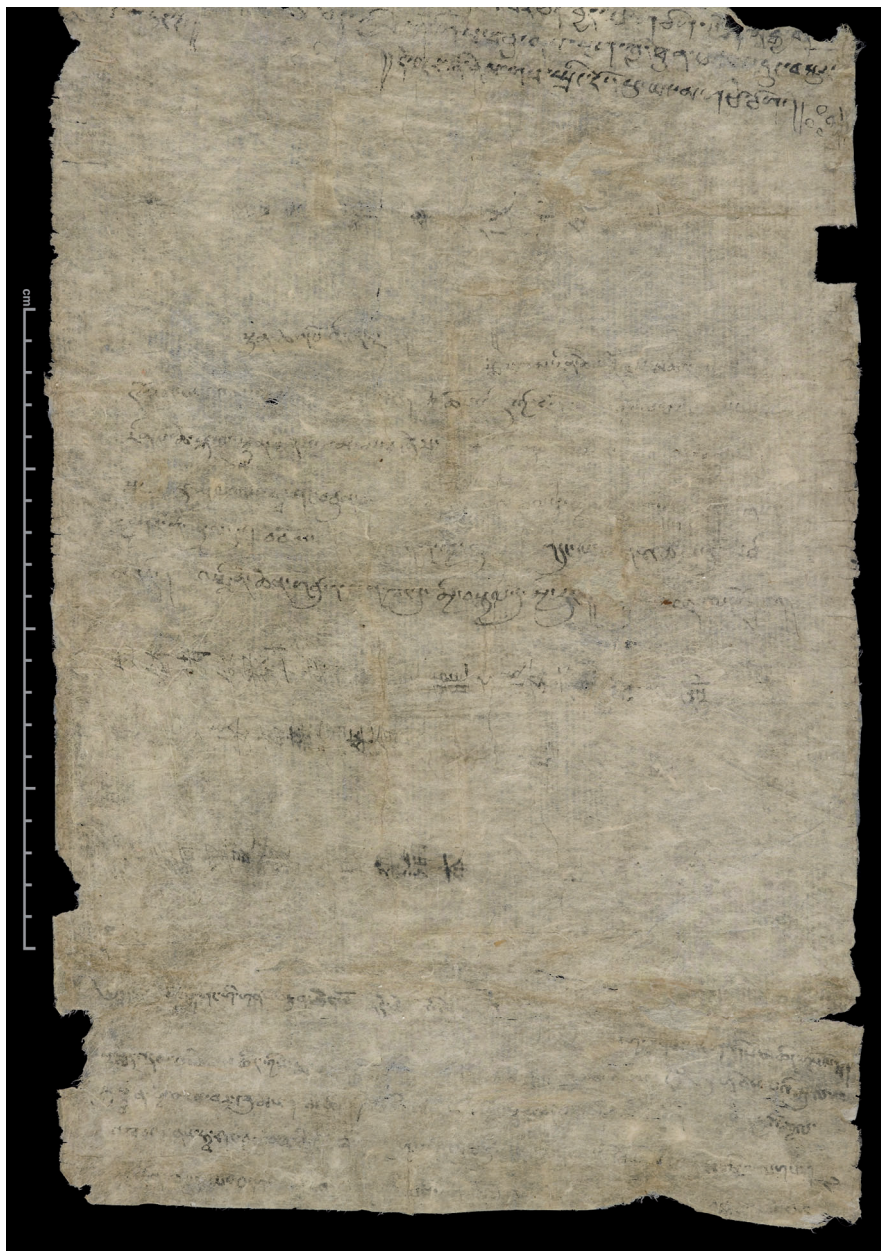




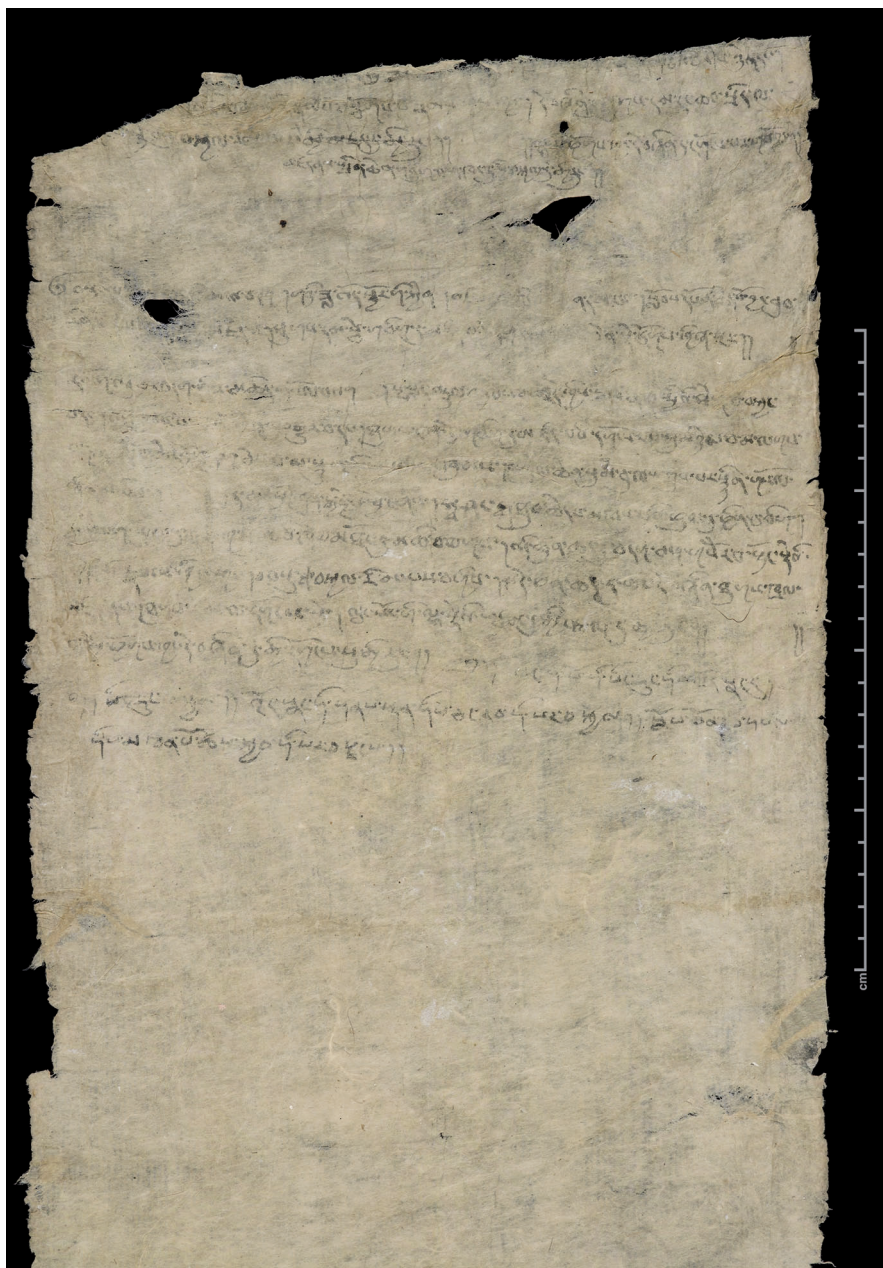
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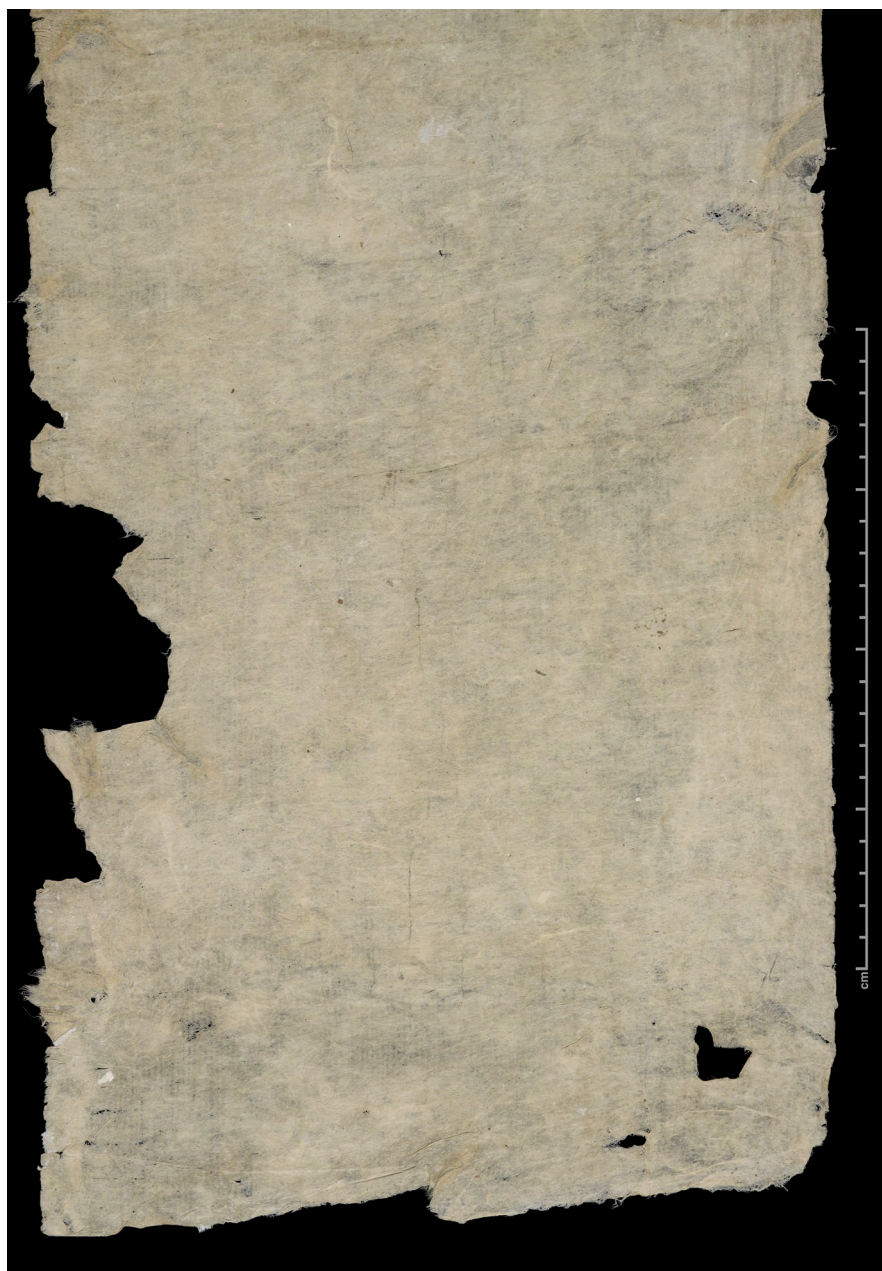
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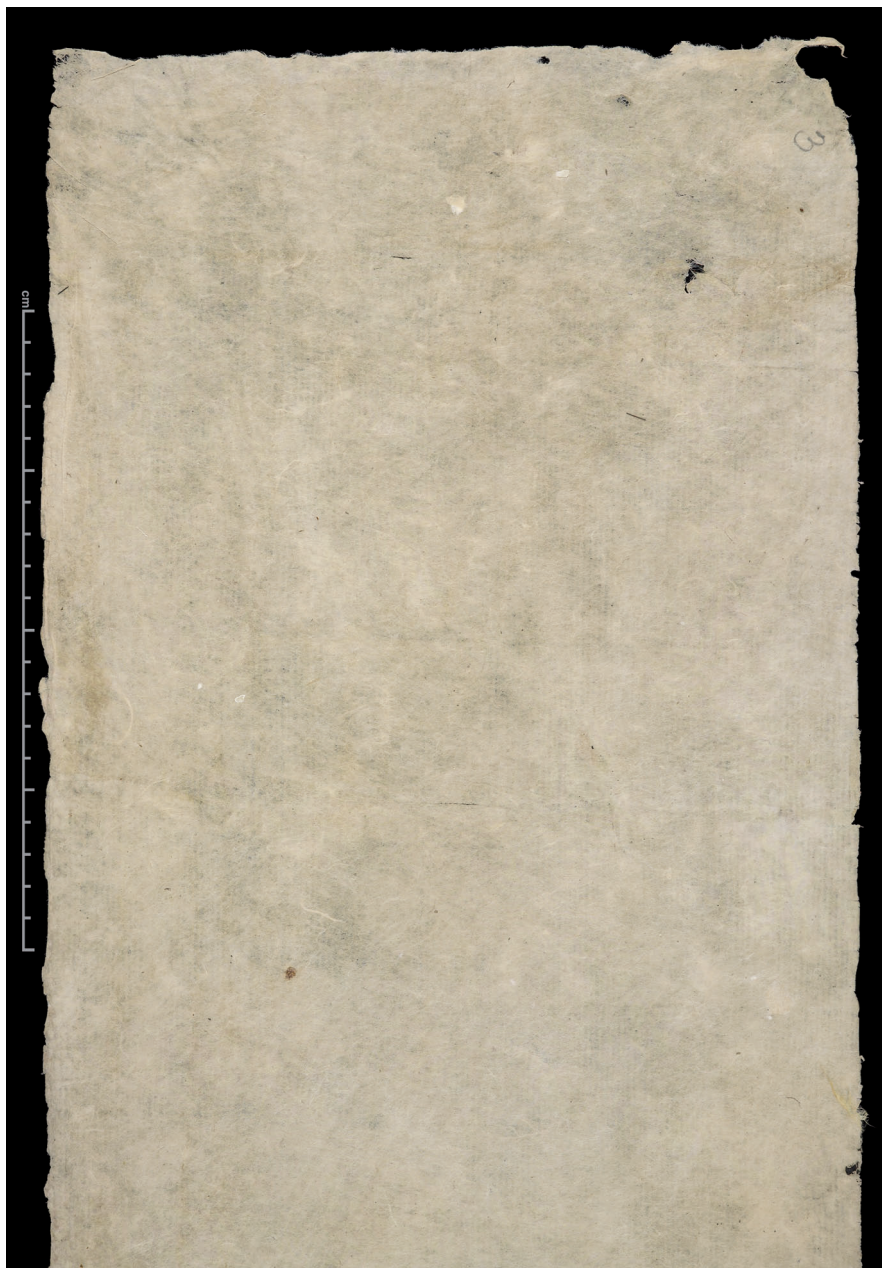
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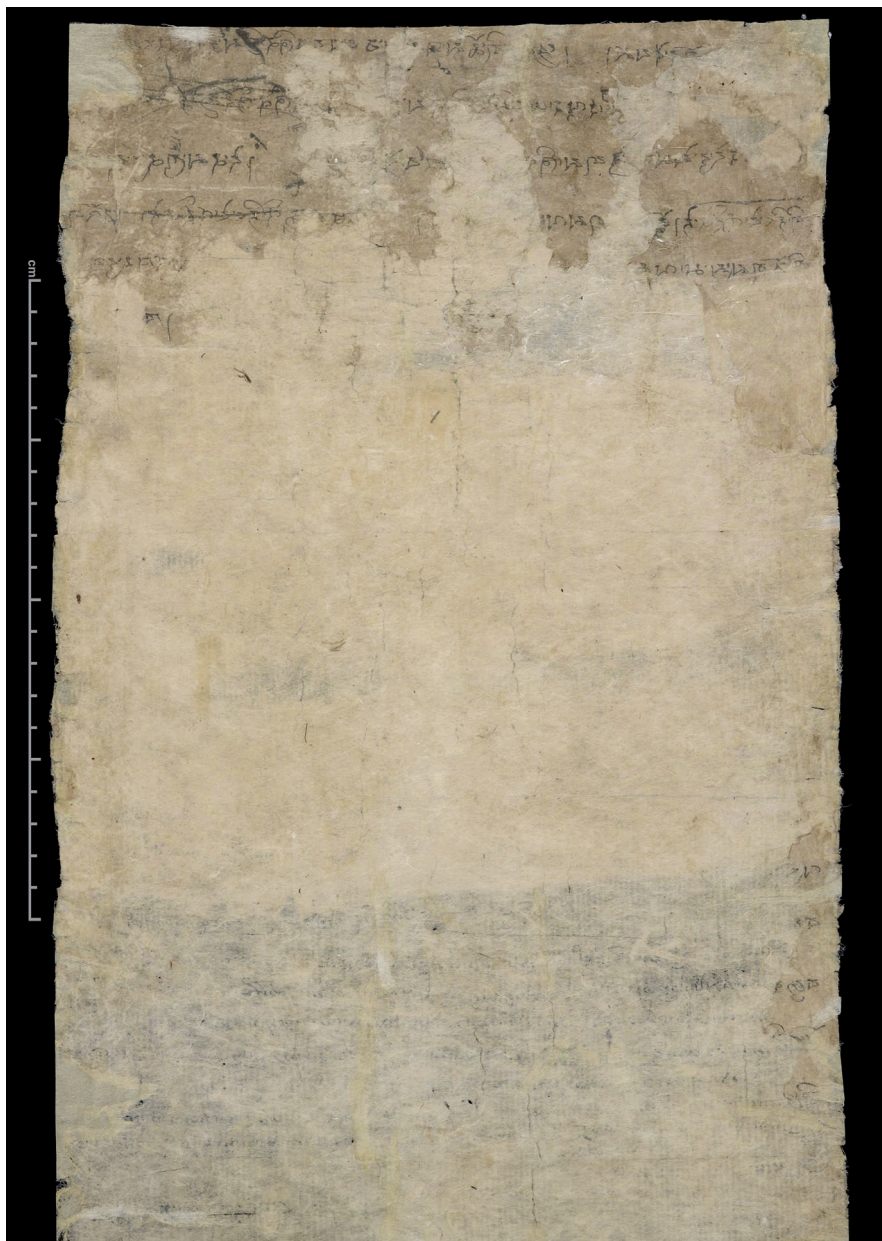
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Manuscript A recto: The letters of passage [7/8]



Manuscript A recto: The letters of passage [8/8]



Manuscript A verso: Mirror-image of text from Manuscript B verso [1/1]

能復以死受生勞忒精神蓋
 王道王忍不雅却憶娘許母報子言汝出
 家莫捨我遠去可於後園其中清淨林木
 茂盛四事供養不令多少時諸太子即便出
 家其母請住後園中一太子時得辟支律
 道如是次第四百九十九太子皆得道果往
 詣宮中至母前說言母出家利益今已
 獲得時諸比丘身昇虛空東踊西沒西踊東
 沒南踊北沒北踊南沒或作大身滿虛空
 中復以一身作無量身或身上出水身下出
 火為其父母作種種神變已即自燒身取
 般涅槃時鹿母夫人收取身骨於後園中即
 起四百九十九塔供養其家小太子過九十
 已亦得辟支佛道亦為父母現大神變現神
 變已即取涅槃爾時其母收其身骨起塔供
 養爾時鹿母夫人燒衆名香作妙伎樂日日
 入後園中供養是五百辟支佛塔於其塔前
 愁憂不樂而作是言我雖生是五百太子
 復出家死而無一人能發菩提之心即立誓願
 我供養是五百辟支佛并起五百塔供養者

入後園中供養是五百辟支佛塔於其塔前
 愁憂不樂而作是言我雖生是五百太子難
 復出家死而無一人能發菩提之心即立誓願
 我供養是五百辟支佛并起五百塔供養者
 利功德慈以迴向普及一切衆令我來世不用
 多生諸子而不能發菩提之心但生一子能
 發道心現世出家得一切智佛告阿難尔
 時鹿母夫人者今摩耶夫人是摩耶夫人供
 養五百辟支佛及修無量善業是故今者生
 如來身佛說此法時有無量百千人天得初
 道果乃至四果有無量衆生發阿耨多羅
 三藐三菩提心元曰里
 尔時阿難白佛言世尊摩耶夫人過去世時
 造何業行生畜生中為鹿女也佛告阿難善
 聽吾當為汝分別解說摩耶夫人宿世行業
 因緣乃往過去無量阿僧祇劫尔時有佛出
 世名毗婆尸如來應供正遍知明行足善逝世
 間解无上士調御丈夫天人師佛世尊在世教
 教化滅度之後於像中法尔時有國名波羅
 奈其國有一婆羅門唯生一女其父命終婆
 羅門婦養育此女年轉長大其家唯有二菓
 園其母以女守園自往求食既自食已復為

其女而送食分日日如是其母一日而便稽
 遲過時不與其女遲飢渴所逼而使惠言
 我母今日何因緣故不與我食不來見者不
 至煩悅再三尋復惠言我母今者不如畜生
 我見畜獸野糜子飢渴時心不捨離如是其
 方來飛空北過尔時其女見此比丘心生歡喜
 即起合掌頭面作礼即便請之為敷淨坐
 取好妙華減其食分奉施比丘比丘食已為
 說妙法示教利喜尔時其女即發願言願我
 來世遭遇賢聖礼事供養使我面首端尊
 榮豪貴若經行時蓮華承足
 佛告阿難尔時女者庶母夫人是以其一食
 淨華覆上施辟支佛五百世中尊榮豪貴
 衣食自然蓮華承足願力因緣今得值五百辟
 支佛礼事供養尔時以一惡言不知其恩毀
 罵其母喻如畜生以是惡口因緣五百身中
 生鹿腹中佛告阿難人生世間禍從口出當
 謹於口甚於猛火猛火熾然能燒一世惡口熾
 然燒无數世猛火熾然燒世間財惡口熾然
 燒聖七財是故阿難一切衆生禍從口出口
 舌者金身之斧威身之禍常說此經時有千

取好妙華減其食分奉施比丘比丘食已為
 說妙法示教利喜爾時其女即發願言願我
 來世遭遇賢聖禮事供養使我面首端尊
 榮豪貴若經行時蓮華永足
 佛告阿難爾時女者歲母夫人是以其一食
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 衣食自然蓮華永足願力因緣今得值五百辟
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 燒聖七財是故阿難一切衆生禍從口出口
 舌者鑒身之斧滅身之禍佛說此經時有千
 億優婆塞優婆夷慎謹口過即得初果復
 有無量比丘比丘足得初道果乃至四果無量
 人天皆發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心乃至辟
 支佛心一切大衆聞佛說法歡喜奉行作禮
 而去
 爾時世尊與阿難入王舍城乞食已還出城
 於城門外有大深坑時王舍城人擔持大小

便利棄是塚中天雨惡水亦其中余時此
 洗水中有一虫其形似人衆多手足遽見如
 未擎頭出水視於如來流淚滿目如來見已
 悉而哀傷慘然不悅即還耆闍崛山余時阿
 難敷尼師檀如來坐上結跏趺坐余時阿難
 觀察衆心問如來言世尊向所見洗尿中虫
 者先世造何業行生此水中為幾時耶復於
 何時當得解脫佛告阿難及諸大衆汝等善
 聽當為汝說阿難乃往過去无量千劫余時
 有佛出興于世教化已周還神沮縣滅度之
 於像法中有一婆羅門造立僧坊供養衆僧
 時有檀越多送蘇油時有客比丘來余時知事
 維那心生瞋恚嫌客僧來多隱匿蘇油停
 持不與客衆僧言何不付蘇油蜜也維那
 荅言汝客我舊客比丘言此是檀越施現
 前僧余時維那凶惡可畏即使罵言汝何
 不噉屎尿也云何從我乃索蘇油以此惡言
 從是已來九十億劫常生於是洗水之中余
 時維那者今此洗水中虫是由過去世發惡
 言訶罵衆僧无无量千世值此屎中佛告諸
 千宿養之工之過惡甚於惡人之生之過

者先世造作業行生山水中流樂時耶復於
 何時當得解脫既佛告阿難及諸大眾汝等善
 聽當為汝說阿難乃往過去无量千劫余時
 有佛出興于世教化已周還神沮縣滅度之
 於像法中有一婆羅門建立僧坊供養衆僧
 時有檀越多送蘇油時有客比丘來余時知事
 維那心生瞋恚嫌客僧來多隱匿蘇油傳
 持不與客衆僧言何不付蘇油蜜也維那
 答言汝客我舊客比丘言此是檀越施現
 前僧余時維那云惡可畏即使罵言汝何
 不敬屎尿也云何從我乃索蘇油以此惡言
 從是已來九十億劫常生於是洗水之中余
 時維那者今此洗水中虫是由過去世發惡
 言訶罵衆僧无无量千世值此屎中律靠第
 子當護於口口之過患甚於猛火父母衆僧
 應讚嘆濡語常念其恩衆僧者出三界之福
 田父母者三界內最勝福田何以故衆僧之
 中有四雙八輩十二賢士供之得福進可成道
 父母者十月懷抱推乾去濕乳哺長大教誨
 妓藝隨時將養及其出家終得解脫度生
 死海自利兼利一切衆生佛告阿難父母衆
 僧是一切衆生種三福田所謂人天法界解

既妙果同之得成佛說此經時元量百千衆
 生人及非人或得初果乃至四果或發阿耨
 多羅三藐三菩提心或發聲聞辟支佛心各
 各合掌禮佛右遶歡喜而去
 復次波羅奈國有一輔相婆羅門家大富
 多饒財寶金銀琉璃珊瑚虎魄烏馬牛羊田
 業僮僕在所充足年過八十生一男兒妙色
 端正人相具足父母歡喜占諸相師占相言
 為其立字號曰均提年始七歲父母愛念放
 令出家往詣刹提利國提羅山至如來所奈
 時如來來四衆圍繞為諸天龍鬼神大衆廣
 說世論及出世間之法時婆羅門白佛言世
 尊垂老之年生育此兒世尊大慈普覆一切
 今以此兒為佛弟子佛言善來比丘鬚髮
 自落袈裟著身佛為說法示教利喜即得道
 果三明六通具八解脫爾時阿難觀察衆心
 咸皆有疑即從坐起整衣照偏袒右肩叉手
 合掌白佛言世尊均提沙彌過去世時作何功
 德修何行業值過世尊獲得道果何以速疾
 佛告阿難均提沙彌非適今也過去世時供

端心人相具足父母歡喜皆諸相師占相言
 為其立字號曰均提年始七歲父母愛念故
 令出家往詣刹提利國提羅山至如來所余
 時如來來四眾圍繞為諸天龍鬼神大眾廣
 說世論及出世間之法時婆羅門白佛言世
 尊垂老之年生育此兒世尊大慈普覆一切
 今以此兒為佛弟子佛言善來比丘躡蹻
 自落袈裟著身佛為說法示教利喜即得道
 果三明六通具八解脫爾時阿難觀察眾心
 咸皆有疑即從坐起整衣照徧袒右肩叉手
 合掌白佛言世尊均提沙彌過去世時作何功
 德修何行業值遇世尊獲得道果何以速疾
 佛告阿難均提沙彌非通今也過去世時供
 養父母眾僧修妙功德遇善知識今得道
 果阿難白佛言願佛說之佛告阿難善聽乃
 往過去无量千歲有佛出世名毗婆尸在世
 教化利益天人化緣已周遷神涅槃滅度後
 於空法中有一年少比丘通達三藏所謂阿
 毗曇藏毗尼藏偕多羅藏面首端心相
 具足辯才說法有妙音聲多人所識刹利婆
 羅門之所供養時有一比丘形體醜陋人相

不覺加復音聲銳重常好讚嘆三寶余時
 三歲年少比丘見其聲惡即使毀罵而作是
 言如是音聲不如狗吠時老比丘言汝何以見
 毀罵也汝不識我耶三歲年少我識汝汝是
 毗婆尸佛心法中摩訶羅老比丘何以不識
 摩訶羅言我所作已辦梵行已立不受後有
 三歲比丘聞是語已心驚毛豎余時摩訶即
 舉右手放大光明普照十方余時三歲即前
 頭面接足礼水衣懺悔而我愚癡不識賢聖
 作是惡業令我來世得近善友值遇聖歸
 盡結解亦如大德佛告阿難余時三歲比丘
 以一惡言訶罵上坐五百身中常作狗身一
 切大衆聞佛說法皆驚覺悚俱發聲言梵
 性於世間毒禍莫先於口余時元量百千人
 皆立接舌頤而說偈言
 假使鐵輪在我頂上旋終不為此苦而發於惡言
 假使鐵輪在我頂上旋終不為此苦毀聖及善人
 佛告阿難舍利弗者於諸衆生為善知識晝
 六夜時常以道眼觀五道衆生所應度者
 尋往度之
 余時摩訶是二國中聞有五百人受此苦

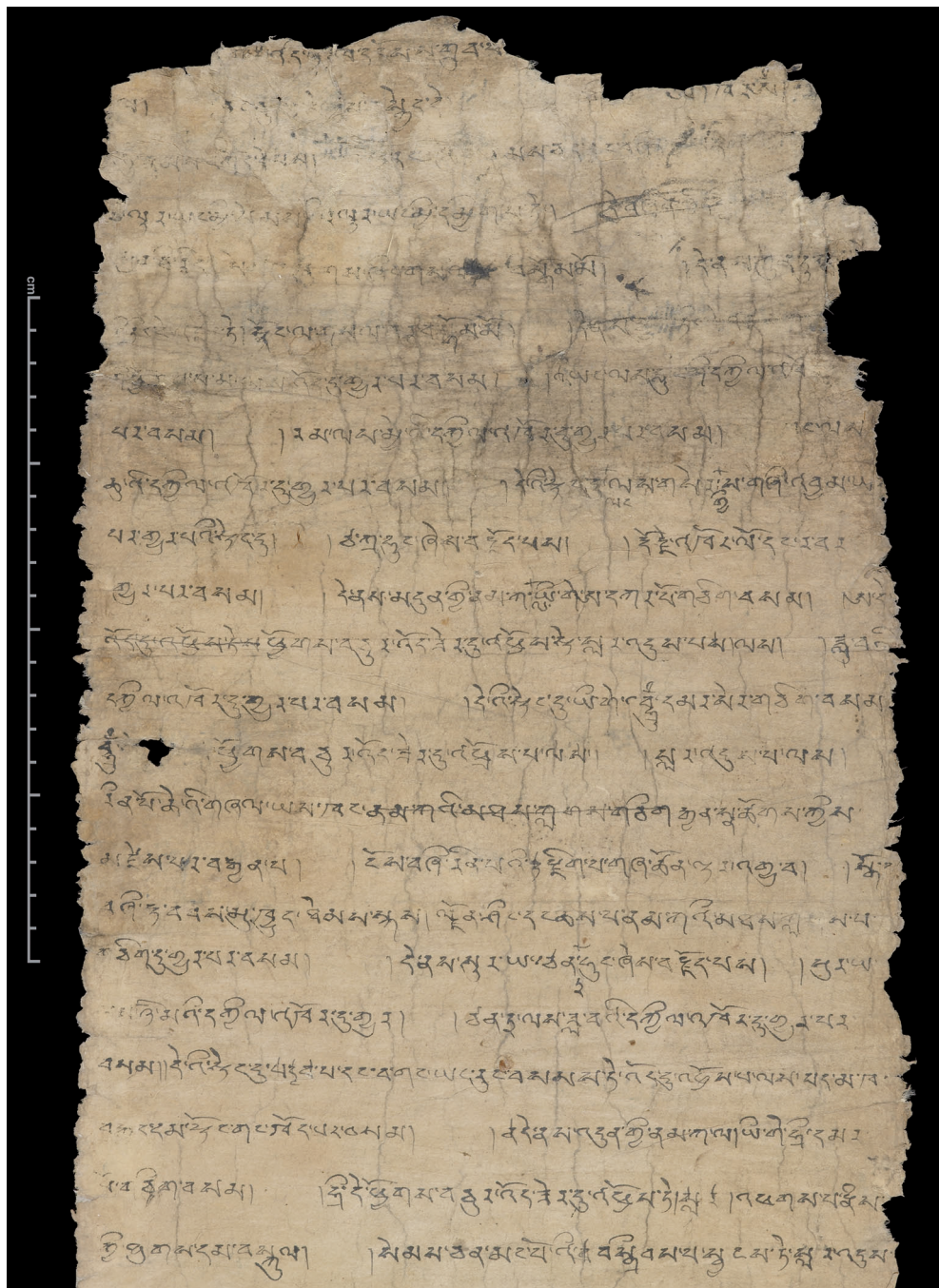
毗婆尸佛正法中摩訶羅老比丘何以不識
摩訶羅言我所作已拜梵行已立不受後有
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頭面接足礼水哀懺悔而我愚癡不識賢
作是惡業令我來世得近善友值遇聖師
盡結解亦如大德佛告阿難余時三歲比丘
以一惡言訶罵上坐五百身中常作狗身
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假使鐵輪在我頂上旋終不為此苦而發於惡言
假使鐵輪在我頂上旋終不為此苦毀聖人善人
佛告阿難舍利弗者於諸衆生為善知識晝
六夜時常以道眼觀五道衆生所應度者
尋往度之

余時摩竭提二國中聞有五百貴客經過
路時估客王將一白狗余時伴王初夜煮肉
作食於後夜時狗偷食之明日伴王欲早飲
食求之不得飢渴所逼瞋恚內發手自持刀斷
狗四足投身塚中槍之而去其狗宛轉受大
苦惱時舍利弗於初夜時道眼遙見過夜

至旦著衣持鉢入城乞食已往詣嶮路至彼
 拘所持食與之目為說法示教利喜拘聞法
 已慙愧不樂却後一七罪畢得出生於天中
 佛告阿難尔時白狗者今均提沙弥是由過
 去世毀罵賢聖墮在惡道由尋欲隱慙懣
 悔發誓願故得遇善友遇善友故罪畢得
 生於人中遇佛世尊即得漏盡佛告阿難當
 念父母及善知識恩是故知恩常當報恩
 知識者是大目犍連佛說此法時无量百千發
 生發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心乃聞聲聞
 群友佛心一切大眾聞佛說法歡喜踊躍作
 礼而去。

報恩經卷第三



州南山感通寺聖容天竺未
 大祖文皇帝膺十奉聖脈百代王英運
 屬龍時鳳舉廓三賴北道銷疵
 德表雄精之貌經綬儒之絕
 被無窮 皇帝時乘馭萬機音
 泉光日月不佳无為而考德
 為獨仍機洞九宅之非經樹
 於保長元奉涼州義上方知
 又空金霞豐京是類八音
 驗者發奇悟於真源律
 源慕之流京野翹汪公惟大慈
 受啓捨珍財敬營塔宇依山
 霄因梓構宇曉未青於讓
 順周通勢放祇園禪室連局
 石壁洞相新轅之所造
 乾德六年六月廿二日僧道和記之

